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Sociology

2015

Convicts and Convictions: The Society, Identity, and Morality of Incarcerated Men

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Princeton, NJ : Princeton University

<http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp01xw42nb29m>

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CONVICTS AND CONVICTIONS:
THE SOCIETY, IDENTITY, AND MORALITY OF INCARCERATED MEN

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A DISSERTATION
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY
OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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September 2015

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Abstract:

This dissertation is a qualitative study of the social and moral order of incarcerated men in the United States. Through one-on-one interviews, administrative document review, and observations, I have discovered a rich moral life of inmates that is intimately tied to their social order. I examine the spatial, temporal, and organizational landscape of the inmates; produce a novel typology of inmates that looks at their relationship with the administrative order and their orientation to either the prison or beyond the prison; examine how inmates manage their body and the space around them; and look at economic activity, both formal and informal, inside of the prison. I use Burke and Stets' social psychological control theory of identity to understand why people behave the way that they do in interaction with others. I conclude with summary statements and present potential policy implications and areas of future research.

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Acknowledgments

I have found this project particularly intellectually and personally rewarding, but it was a high-risk project from the outset, and one that took years to complete. I have many, many people to thank for their on-going intellectual, institutional, and emotional support.

Devah Pager has supported my academic and analytic development since my first day at Princeton. When I told her of my initial ideas for this project, she declared it blockbuster and has championed it at every turn. She encouraged me to carry on in the days when I felt that I could not or should not. That we are seeing any results of research is due to her on-going commitment to that first enthusiasm I brought to her so many years ago.

My intellectual and professional mentors Miguel Centeno and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly have been pillars of strength and beacons of guidance. Their contributions extend far beyond this dissertation. Viviana Zelizer's grace and incisiveness is a model for me, and her guidance continues to make me a more rigorous intellectual.

I must acknowledge the Massachusetts Department of Correction for their generous and continual support of the research. While many similar institutions have restricted or closed access to researchers, I found their entire organization professional, welcoming, and helpful. Their Research and Planning Division embraced this project

from its first submission. Linda Griffin was particularly keen on helping design a project that was as rigorous as possible while adhering to department protocols and protecting the rights of participants.

I have many people to acknowledge at MCI-Shirley Medium. One of Superintendent Kelly Ryan's first acts at Shirley was to approve this project, and I owe her a debt of gratitude. She allowed me access to inmates and programs in a manner that was unexpected. Without her consent, none of what follows would have been possible.

I worked along side numerous people in the administration and programs offices at Shirley, and I thank all of them. For reasons of confidentiality I cannot name them individually, but they each contributed to my experience in the field. The friendliness and support I received in the administration building stays with me to this day. The frankness of attitude that characterized the folks working in programs is a tribute to the working climate there. And the officers, who are the front lines of the incarceration system in this country, were wonderfully open and supportive of my presence. I was always a security risk, yet they treated me with respect and were willing to talk to me about their work in a way I was not expecting. It goes without saying – but I will anyway – that I am deeply grateful to the men who were in custody at Shirley. Whether they participated actively in the interview process, were a part of my observations, or simply resided at Shirley during my research tenure, I thank them all for sharing their lives with me.

I became a McNair scholar as part of the first cohort of the program at the University of Arizona. The program provides life-long commitment to helping underrepresented students get graduate education. I directly experienced this commitment. After graduating with a bachelor's degree I promptly left education for travel and working, despite the program's express interest in having me enter graduate education. My decision to return to graduate training four years later was met with nothing but warm greetings and institutional and financial assistance. Maria Teresa Velez, the Associate Dean of the Graduate College, and Nura Duelah and Andrew Huerta, both McNair program director/coordinators, were especially vital to my entry into and successful completion of my graduate education. I remain a McNair Scholar for life, and I am forever grateful for its role in my life.

I must now turn to my personal debts. The making of an intellectual is a social process, and I am happy to report that I have grown in friendship as much as scholarship in my time at Princeton. My cohort is where all of my Princeton education started. They gave me intellectual support, challenge, feedback – and in the process became colleagues in the truest sense. Beyond my cohort, Sarah Brayne, Sarah Bush, Alfredo Garcia, Victoria Reyes, and Allison Schnable have become so much more than colleagues, and I number them among my friends. The women of the Graduate Women of Color Caucus and Dean Karen Jackson-Weaver made my life at Princeton so much richer. I am proud and confident as a woman and a scholar because of their wisdom and mutual association. Craig Upright and the rest of the accountability group are the reasons this project has finished even more strongly than it started.

The Department of Sociology at Princeton University is made up of many more people than the professors and students who intellectualize there. I have come to hold Lil, Leidis, and Tony with the highest regard. They have maintained my offices and my sanity through all these many years. Donna Defrancisco, Cindy Gibson, and Amanda Rowe are a well-oiled machine, and they also happen to be fantastic human beings to whom I express the greatest appreciation.

There are a number of people outside of my academic life who have borne my emotional and intellectual passions and vagaries with love, tolerance, and a stamina that can only come from a place of genuine care and ideal amity. Judith Barr, Valerie D'Amico, Zaire Durant-Young, Lauren Lynch, Tom McDermott, Christopher-Ian Reichel and Joshua Schnable are among my closest friends in life, and I met them all in my time as a graduate student.

And now I must turn to the very reasons for my existence, my drive, and my purpose. Lonnie Smith gave me life many years ago, and all of this—all of it—is in her honor. Laura Enriquez and Steven Smith are the brightest stars of my life. Funny, smart, loving, accepting, and precious—"sibling" doesn't begin to describe our connection and their meaning to me in my life. Delora Pyritz is my true life partner.

What will come of this east coast experience and what it all "means" has not yet been revealed. For now, I am simply happy to have lived it.

Memory, Quotations, and Obscurity

I was an overt researcher in the field. All of the people I encountered were well aware of my purpose for being a Shirley. One of the benefits of this position was that I was able to carry my field notebook with me everywhere, and people were quite tolerant of my taking notes, even as we were talking informally. Similar to Duneier's (1999) experience, there were times when people would outright tell me, "Put this in your book!"

Whenever people said that, I was sure to write down what they were saying.

Unfortunately, not everything has been put into this work.

There were times in my field research that I could not write down notes as I observed an interaction or spoke with a person at the prison. I would reconstruct conversations and scenes in my field notes, sometimes within minutes of the event, but never longer than a few hours after. Memory is faulty, and I was careful not to use quotation marks in my notes unless phrases were particularly memorable.

My notes are far from perfect or comprehensive of my experience. When writing this dissertation, I used only material that was in my field notes from my time in the field or digital recordings of interviews. I never reconstructed conversations or events in my notes after leaving the field. This is to say that I have not relied on my long-term memory for this study, and all documented scenes and conversations are from notes that were made within hours of their occurrence.

When quoting inmates, I use quotations set off in blocks or double quotation marks when directly quoting from a digital recording of the interview or when I have

the actual words written in my notes in quotations (indicating I was writing the words down as he spoke them). Quotes from other people in the prison use double quotes when I have detailed notes including specific phrases that were used. If my notes were reconstructed after the interaction, I use paraphrases and reported speech.

Qualitative research is closely monitored by human subjects protections protocols, and I was responsible to both Princeton University's Internal Review Board (including a special anonymous advocate for inmate subjects) and the Massachusetts Department of Corrections Research and Planning Division. This is to say nothing of my own concern for basic ethical principles of research. I am required to obscure personally identifying information when possible so as to make third party identification of participants very difficult or impossible. I gave all subjects the option of choosing a pseudonym, having a pseudonym randomly selected, or using their actual name. I have used general descriptors ("father of three," "member of the Latin Kings") to convey some biographical information. The nature of my research experience and the writing of this dissertation preclude making identification by those at the prison in the study unidentifiable to themselves. No doubt the people in this study will recognize their own contributions to the work, and perhaps they will be able to recognize some of their co-subjects as well. Maintaining confidentiality also means that some instantiations of morality and codes could not be used, simply because the details necessary to convey the example would be too revealing of the participants and to each other.

I have generally avoided using race or ethnicity markers unless the participant indicated that was particular to their story. I have also changed some identifying details of non-inmate people (gender, rank) if I thought it would create confidentiality without changing the substantive contribution to the work. Further, the security and administration personnel of a prison are limited in number. It would be difficult if not impossible to eliminate identification of some people – such as the superintendent of the facility during my research tenure.

Good qualitative research strives to achieve the same goals of all quality research regardless of method or confidentiality requirements: reliability, accuracy, and replicability. I have kept these principles in mind throughout my data collection and analysis, and I hope that they are evident in the work that follows.

Introduction

This dissertation is designed to answer critical questions of social order and moral commitments among incarcerated men and the way these reflect and shape identity by entering the long-dormant field of qualitative prison studies. It uses the prison as a total institution (Goffman 1961) and a strategic research site (Merton 1987)¹ constituted by particular spaces (such as the cell, visiting room, gymnasium/weight room, courtyard, programming spaces, and the grounds themselves) and behaviors such as the participation in the formal and the informal economies to highlight the processes through which incarcerated individuals create and maintain social relations and construct identities.

I select the prison as a particular research location because it is a highly constrained environment, one which limits the behaviors, spaces, materials and services that are otherwise available to individuals to mitigate uncertainty, express themselves, and establish and exercise power. These limitations, in turn, give salience to the ways people conduct their lives through relational activities among various performers rather than as isolated, self-interested actors with access to broad resources (Zelizer 2006; Zelizer 2012). The constraints of incarcerated life also give prominence to the usually hidden meanings (Douglas [1975] 1999) and systems of order (Foucault [1966] 1994) that

¹ According to Merton (1987), strategic research sites are the locations where “empirical material exhibits the phenomena to be explained or interpreted to such an advantage and in such accessible form that it enables the fruitful investigation of previously stubborn problems and the discovery of new problems for further inquiry” (10-11).

are constructed and expressed through interaction with others. Finally, these constraints also highlight the meaning-making and informal (and often rule-breaking) behaviors people enact in order to establish and maintain a sense of self. I reveal the multivalent behaviors and attitudes prisoners use to make manifest and reconcile the often-conflicting identities and moral commitments of their lives.

The importance of studying incarceration in the United States cannot be overstated. At present, the US is living through an era of unprecedented levels of incarceration (Garland 2001), the product of a process that began over forty years ago (Wakefield and Uggen 2010). At mid-year 2012 (the most recent year for published statistics), local jails housed 744,500 inmates, with state and federal prisons housing an additional 1,483,900, for a grand total of 2,228,400 incarcerated adults in the United States². Add to this the 4,781,300 people under probation or parole, and the total number of adults in the United States' correctional system (those incarcerated or under community supervision via parole or probation) is 6,937,600³.

Even when examining incarceration in state and federal prisons independently, the rate of incarceration has escalated dramatically since the 1970s. Wakefield and Uggen (2010) present a summary of the history of incarceration rates since 1925, highlighting the large increase since 1973. They further demonstrate how the United States' rates of incarceration far outdistance those of other nations. Common

² All correctional system population statistics are taken from Glaze and Herberman (2013).

³ While most relevant accounts focus on the more than two million people residing behind bars, the total number of individuals under correctional supervision — nearly seven million — is seldom acknowledged. Such a massive population represents 1 out of 35 adult residents of the US, the *lowest* rate that has been observed since 1997. The recent decline of 51,000 offenders from 2011 was driven in large part by California's Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011, which mandated policy changes to reduce California's prison population.

comparisons are to repressive regimes, such as Russia and Cuba, as well as similarly developed and democratic countries such as England and Canada. In 2006 the United States had an adult incarceration rate of 751 per 100,000 residents. For comparison, Russia had a rate of 611 and Cuba a rate of 487. England and Wales together had an incarceration rate of 148 per 100,000, and Canada a rate of 107. Not only does the United States exist in an era of mass incarceration, it is alone in the democratic world in this regard.

Despite political and social concerns about the growing carceral state in the US, very little is known or understood about incarcerated life and its effects on the individual. While there is a rich literature about the difficulties communities face when absorbing former prisoners (Alexander 2010; Clear 2007; Hagan 1996; Lynch and Sabol 2004; Moore 1996; Pager 2007; Travis 2005), there is still not enough known about the lives of the imprisoned as subjects of knowledge production themselves. Wacquant (2002) and Simon (2000b) have both noted the alarming lack of prison-based qualitative research in recent decades. In the early 1980s prisons became closed to researchers and observation just as the era of mass incarceration began. Thus, there are only a handful of observation-based studies of those living behind bars after the prison boom (Comfort 2008; Fleisher 1989; Rhodes 2004). Wacquant states succinctly,

The ethnography of the prison . . . went into eclipse at the very moment when it was most urgently needed on both scientific and political grounds. (385)

While Wacquant highlights the lack of observational work in prison studies, Simon (2000b) notes the shift in focus in prison knowledge from social orders to prisons as sites of governance and management, arguing that

... [W]e need to reconstitute sources of knowledge that can make prison social order more visible to a public whose infatuation with incarceration depends on deep ignorance as to its fundamental effects. (303)

These pressing concerns were articulated over a decade ago and there has been virtually no change in the intellectual landscape since that time.

Despite having lost nearly all autonomy, forms of individual expression, and contact with the outside, incarcerated people work hard to find and create sense in their everyday lives. The account here elucidates the ways in which inmates use the space around them and material and symbolic transactions with other prisoners and with non-incarcerated people to participate in not only identifiable social systems but also to enact coherent ethical codes. The moral orders of prisons, as we will see, are much more complex than anything previously described in the literature, and they rest not simply in the inmate-inmate relationship or the inmate-officer dynamic, but in the interaction between the prison as an institution and the outside world.

In this dissertation I ask, how does one construct self from the ground up in the face of constant physical, social, and psychological devastation? How do people reconcile conflicting roles – family member, hustler, true man, and authority contender, convict/criminal, absentee parent, and inmate? How do people create themselves within and across institutions? How are principles and commitments to those principles linked to identity and social structures?

Below, I present an overarching framework which describes the prison as a place of confinement and locates the institution within the broader society. Subsequently I describe the process of incarceration as identity destruction, and the various ways in which that destruction occurs. I then put forward a definition of the prison moral order and argue for its pervasive influence on carceral life. Next, I point to the dissertation's contribution to the literatures of economic sociology, culture, and prison studies. The final two sections discuss my methodology and provide brief summaries of the chapters in the dissertation.

The Society within Prison—the Prison within Society

Prison social order is described and examined repeatedly in the relevant literature. The classic prison studies from 1940 through the early 1980s all examine the lives of those inside as a society in themselves. The major contributions of this era of the literature center on debates of the source of inmate identity and behavior. Here I review this literature and present a framework of analysis that examines the prison as a society in itself, but I also examine the prison *within* society and the ways that behaviors and meanings inside the prison walls reflect their place in the broader society.

Sykes (Sykes [1958] 2007) discusses the “pains of imprisonment” (63ff) and details at length various roles of inmates that develop in response to the deprivations of incarceration. He argues that such identities develop as a direct result of the prison environment and its associated deprivations. He further contends that the prison's social order encompasses various roles, each a response to facets of imprisonment but

all part of an “inmate code” that creates a sharp divide between guards and inmates. Both groups are bounded internally in solidarity against the other. Adjustments to the pains of incarceration, and the construction of an inmate code, hint at the social and moral order that develops in prisons. Sykes, however, does not explore the possibility that inmates may act in one role at a particular time or situation and at another time in a different role, nor does he elucidate the way that broader societal forces affect inmate orders of interaction.

Like Sykes, Goffman (1961) sees the inmate world as one constructed through any number of primary and secondary responses to the deprivations and degradations that inmates experience throughout their confined lives. Goffman provides a foundation with which to understand the nature of the prison as a total institution, the humiliations and sufferings it inflicts, and the ways that inmates mitigate those humiliations as individuals and group members through specific behaviors such as stealing or deceiving guards.

Irwin ([1970] 1987), in sharp contrast to Sykes and Goffman, argues that the felon identity is one of continuity, thus the social world of prisoners is derived from their pre-incarceration identities. Unlike Sykes, Irwin further highlights that the behavior of prisoners are also temporally influenced; that is, the behaviors of newly incarcerated differ from those in the middle of their sentences which, in turn, differ from those of inmates near the end of their sentences (101). Irwin also notes an erosion of prisoner solidarity resulting from participation in various educational and vocational programs

(66). According to him, racial and ethnic identity operates as a major dividing factor in inmate social order (80ff), something Sykes never touches upon.

These two intellectual traditions led to the long-standing deprivation versus importation theoretical debate, one which still influences empirical investigations of the prison today. Is what we witness inside a simple reflection of the forces and behaviors occurring in broader society, or are these behaviors exacerbated by the dynamics of the prison? This is a question of enduring value, which has no easy answer. I find that inmates cope with the deprivations and identity challenges of the prison environment using the tools they have. Social and moral orders inside are specific responses to the incarceration context, but they are built upon existing codes and identity management practices learned from the streets. I argue that the social and moral orders of incarcerates are informed by, but do not conform entirely, to expectations and roles held prior to imprisonment. For example, while I agree with Irwin's emphasis on a continuity of identity, I focus on how inmates describe themselves in their own terms, which only rarely includes the designations of criminal or deviant prevalent in Irwin's work.

Starting in the 1970s studies of prisons took an administrative turn. Jacobs's (1977) study of the changing institutional organization of an Illinois prison over the course of fifty years provides an excellent argument that organizational structure influences and is influenced by inmate expectations and behaviors. Between the 1930s and the 1960s, the prison's social order emerged from a formal labor structure but, as inmate labor was curtailed, that social order was replaced. Jacobs gives extensive

attention to gangs, arguing that they, with their meanings and structures imported from the streets and their strong racial and ethnic identities, have become the single greatest organizing force in the inmate social world. Gangs alleviated adaptation pains of newly incarcerated members, providing a buffer against poverty by distributing food, cigarettes and even correspondents and visitors to members in need, and a ready-made distribution network for contraband.

DiIulio (1987) later documented the variations in prison atmosphere, quality of life, and violence, and he attributed these variations to differences in administrative models. Examining three prison systems, Texas, Michigan, and California, he identified administrative styles based on control, inmate responsibility, and consensus respectively, and argued that these ideal types had observable and important effects on inmate life and the running of prisons.

Prisons as Prisms

My study builds on these early efforts and seeks to similarly construct an understanding of the prison as strategic site of power and domination, relational activity, expressive capacity, administrative order, and moral construction. Most relevant studies have focused on the prison as a society in itself. In fact, nearly all have further limited their view to the prison inmate population. Very few, namely Goffman (1961) and Conover (2000), examine at any meaningful length the interaction between officers and inmates. The same may be said about the relationship between prisoners and other populations. It is necessary to conceptualize the prison as part of a broader

institutional system that encompasses the perspectives of external observers and those inside.

For example, past studies have characterized the prison as a location for the enactment of specific gender roles. Sabo and his colleagues (2001b) put forth a compelling argument that the hyper-masculinity inside prison walls is rooted in the patriarchal order and hegemonic masculinity of American life outside the prison walls. Similarly, I claim that the behaviors and attitudes of incarcerated people do not develop from nothing, but neither are they a perfect reflection of broader society. Instead, they often are prismatic responses in the context of an isolated and brutal institution. In other words, one of my objectives is to extend Sabo's insight to other areas of social order and ethical life by specifying transformations in perceptions and social performance resulting from acute regulation and surveillance.

These permutations are observable in various terrains, including morality, economics, and networks in addition to gender and sexuality. Confined men often make moral claims as fallen angels and prodigal sons, which are pleas for forgiveness and redemption. Such ideas are rooted in the religious texts familiar to all Americans of the Abrahamic faiths. Yet these religious texts also produce the identity of Cain, he who is forever marked and shunned. Broader society identifies convicted people through a "Cain paradigm," permanently labeling them as convicts and limiting their full participation in society after incarceration. The prison society draws upon the very same spiritual narratives as broader society when identifying inmates, yet the two do not always assign the same moral persona for the captives of the system.

Economic activity – formal and informal – also exist inside prison walls and are reflective of the economics of American life more broadly. Inmates use officially monitored accounts to buy institutionally-provided goods, participating in the formal economy established by the prison administration. Prisoners also participate in unregulated markets of goods and services, using legal tender transacted beyond the walls, favors, barter, and alternative forms of currency. This informal economy is similar to informal economies around the globe, reflecting capitalistic practices and expectations of the “regular” economy, such as standard rates of return on loans, but also incorporating relational practices, identity expression through preferences, and the development of alternative forms of currency. Art, for example, can become the shadow of money in the absence of real currency (Elvin 2012).

Similarly we can observe networks⁴ that develop or are maintained within the prison and across its walls. The networks inside can be economically rooted, such as networks of goods and services, but they can also be social and moral in nature. Common internally organized complexes are centered on gang-affiliation, race or ethnic affiliation, previous prison contacts, or hometown or neighborhood residence. Networks of contacts can span the walls of prisons, linking diverse groups of people including family and friends, but also religious groups, educational volunteers, and re-entry specialists. These bridging networks connect the confined to the world beyond the

⁴ It may also be the case that Zelizer circuits (Zelizer 2005a; Zelizer 2010) also exist in the prison context. These are economic connections that, unlike networks, are bounded, and which are laden with cultural meaning and symbols. Such circuits have been documented around the world in diverse practices such as remittances (Zelizer 2006), music and art (Schmoll and Semi 2013), and the gemstone industry (Wherry 2012a). I was unable to access the data necessary to trace whether Zelizer circuits existed at my field site, but the controlled nature of the prison and the bounded communities from which most inmates come from certainly point to a site ripe for investigation.

walls. These networks are critical for both maintaining a self-definition that existed prior to incarceration but also for connecting the prisoner to broader society. These networks may be based on entrepreneurial activities, familial ties, or religious or other cultural communities.

Table 1 summarizes how these categorical concepts (moral narratives, gender/sexuality, economic activity, and networks) exist both as a part of prison as a society itself but also as a part of prisons which are embedded in broader society. For example, the moral narratives and codes in broader American society typically draw on stories and symbols from the Abrahamic faiths, and so, too, do moral codes and meaning inside prison. However, inmates in prison are often seen as the Cain figure, whereas inmates align themselves (and are often encouraged by religious volunteers to do so) with the Prodigal Son. This is an example of how prisoners are a part of society (drawing on the same cultural narratives), yet are apart from society (having different interpretations of the cultural material).

Sabo and his colleagues demonstrate that the hypermasculinity inside is a function of the prison environment – deprivations of heterosexual relations and objects, deprivation of autonomy, threats of bodily harm – but that these deprivations and threats only exacerbate the pre-existing masculine norms of society, what Connell (1995) called “hegemonic masculinity. Thus the prison environment does not create hypermasculinity de novo, instead the environment mutates or permutates the existing norms and structures of gender and sexuality.

Prisons constituents draw upon their knowledge and meanings gleaned from their life outside the walls, and as such it is not surprising that we see hustling both outside the prison, especially in economically deprived neighborhoods, and inside the prison. And similarly, networks of relations and meaning abound both internal to prison and spanning the prison walls.

These are just a few representative examples of the ways in which we can understand how the prison social and ethical orders reflect wider community structures and values. The variety of examples highlights how American life is constitutive of prison life in all its aspects. The fundamental assumption of this dissertation is that the study of the social life of the incarcerated not only provides insight on an institution of profound importance in the United States today and its effects on the people within its grasp, but that it also sheds light on American culture, morality, and social control more broadly. For example, by observing the hyper-masculinity inside a male prison, we can gain insight into the role of masculinity in broader culture. Understanding informal trade in a prison can help us understand why people engage in informal activity, how they use unregulated markets to express identity, and the ways that economic systems operate in the absence of a strong state.

Table 1: Analytical Concepts in the Prison as/ within Society Paradigm

	Moral Narrative	Sexuality/Gender	Economic Activity	Networks
Prison as a Society	Fallen angel/ Prodigal son	Hyper-masculinity	Prison hustles, expressive economies	Internal
Prison within Society	Cain	Hegemonic masculinity/Patriarchy	Street hustles	Bridging

Identity and Incarceration

The Social Psychological Understanding of Identity

Identities are constructed and expressed through behaviors, thoughts, relationships, and responses to social stimuli. A person contains many identities, each expressed contextually and through interaction with others. Burke and Stets (2009) state,

An identity is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person. ...People possess multiple identities because they occupy multiple roles, are members of multiple groups, and claim multiple personal characteristics, yet the meanings of these identities are shared by members of society. (3)

According to identity theory, identity is the meanings that people attribute to themselves at multiple levels: as a person (person identity), role holder (role identity), or a member of a group (social identity) (Stets and Carter 2011). Person identities are

global, and transcend role and social identities, such that characteristics of a person identity are found in various role and social identities.

Identity theory is deeply concerned with the relationship between the self and society, and the ways the two relate. It brings these two levels of analysis together through the identity verification process. The development and expression of identities is a reflexive process, using feedback from social exchanges to modify behavior in order to maintain a coherent self-definition. The individual's consciousness of self emerges from verbal and non-verbal feedback received in social situations as well as from interaction between roles. People observe and respond to feedback from social relations. Responses that are dissonant with a person's sense of self create negative emotions and cause an individual to modify his behavior in an attempt to elicit reactions, spoken and unspoken, that are consistent with the person, role, or membership being played at the time. Feedback that conforms to a person's self-definition reaffirms a particular behavior or form of verbal or non-verbal communication. This is the identity verification process, in which external and internal feedback is used to evaluate conformity to an ideal identity. Adherence or lack of conformity to this ideal self causes emotions that induce behavioral responses to elicit identity conforming feedback. This entire process of environmental input, cognitive identity verification, and external behaviors is called the "control system approach" by Burke and Stets (P. J. Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Carter 2011).

Using this control system approach, we can begin to understand the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that link self and behavior. Gordo, an inmate we will get to know more intimately in Chapter 2, described in practical terms this process for him:

This whole entire course of my life I've always valued how other people viewed me. You know, I think part of us growing up in our neighborhoods, we grow up more insecure, we want to be validated, we want to be liked by our peers. I think that's just human nature. We want to be accepted by the people around us. Nobody wants to be a social pariah.

Here Gordo does an excellent job of verbalizing the identity process: he explains how he sees himself and how that plays into a need for acceptance (identity conforming feedback) from others.

Gordo goes on to talk about the feedback he was getting from his son's mother, who was unhappy with his return to prison and his constant segregation status for bad disciplinary behavior. She stated that she didn't know what to tell his son about his actions.

So at that moment, at that very moment, I said, You know what? ... All the other shit I was doing I'm done with. This is when I made this decision. I said, because I love my family. I value my family, but I'm not showing that value. I just say it in words. Words ain't shit.

He goes on to describe the way he approached his new prison sentence of seven to ten years as an opportunity to transition through the system, to make it a different experience, to show through actions that his family had meaning for him. We can see that Gordo valued his role as a father, he received feedback from his environment (the mother of his child) that was inconsistent with his role identity as a father, and thus he changed his behavior to elicit feedback that was more in keeping with his self-view.

In this way, social interaction is a fundamental component of identity. Further, a person's self is developed not only through reciprocal actions with other people, but also through interactions within the self. For example, an inmate's role as a father outside the prison can inform his role as a mentor inside prison. Behaviors that are associated with a particular role, such as caring, mentoring, or teaching, can be used in another role in order to generate identity-affirming feedback.

Identity Theory and Morality

Stets and Carter (2011) demonstrate through a survey and laboratory work that a moral identity exists on a continuum, such that people may identify as having a low, medium, or high sense of morality. Further, these differences translate into varying degrees of cheating behavior and varying degrees of negative emotion in relation to such immoral behavior. They verify that variations in a moral identity conform to variations in emotion and behavior.

According to Stets and Carter, the moral self is a person identity. That is, an individual's sense of morality is a global characteristic which is "not attached to a specific role or group" (197). As such it influences decision-making and behavior across identity contexts. This is a critical claim, one which is verified throughout this book. I had avoided any talk of right or wrong, accountability, or morality in my interview questions. I was not interested in assessing or documenting the extent to which these men felt culpable for their convictions, or whether they felt they had experienced some sort of morality-based remorse. And yet, as you will see, the language of ethics and judgment was pervasive in my notes and recordings, from discussions of body care and

cleanliness and acceptable behavior in the chow hall (described in Chapter 2), to economic transactions formal and informal (Chapter 4), to talk of family, friends, and groups internal to the prison (Chapter 2). That the moral self is a global identity that needs conforming feedback explains why inmates use ethical and moral language when describing much of their lives on the inside to me. They are seeking my verification of their sense of self, and this was comprehensive of multiple contexts and roles.

The prison research presented in this book conforms to this understanding of morality and identity, and further provides evidence that non-conforming identity feedback results in particular behavioral and verbal responses. Inmates are often confronted with environmental feedback in prisons that runs counter to their self-identities, moral and otherwise. Throughout the book I present ways in which inmates mitigate this feedback through behaviors and cognitive identity adjustments.

For example, in Chapter 2, I argue that an inmate typology can be constructed based on variations in orientation with or against the administrative order and prison or society focus. These variations in orientation coincide with particular identities and are linked to moral claims. In Chapter 3, I demonstrate the importance of an appearance and embodied experience of cleanliness is to inmates as a response to the open toilet with which they must live, how food preparation can be tied to maintaining cultural identities, and the ways in which autonomy is regained through gestures and low-risk defiance of administrative orders. In Chapter 4, I show how moral claims are made even in economic transactions and help us to understand why inmates go to such lengths to engage in the informal economy to recreate pre-incarceration identities

through material culture. While disparate, these various aspects of prison life demonstrate the myriad ways incarcerated people are managing and expressing their identities in prison. These management practices often take on an ethical tone, or are rooted in judgment or comparison with other groups.

Incarceration as Identity Devastation and Transformation

The process of arrest, confinement, trial, conviction, and incarceration is a prolonged, painful ritual of debasement and the stripping away of names, personal property, materials of expressive personality, and relations with the outside world. It is the demolition of identity, not of a single personality, but of the multiple roles and selves that make up the whole character of the individual as described above.

Incarceration is not a single event but a long process that repeatedly and ritually challenges and demolishes the self. The ways through which this occurs are manifold, including social isolation, material deprivations, bodily control, and spatial confinement. While there is a distinct event that strips a person of his or her clothing and name as they are initiated into the identity of prisoner, the effect of incarceration is on-going and pervasive. Daily encounters with the carceral environment make it challenging to live a role other than that of inmate. Structural forces, such as standing counts and limited programming, reinforce the inmate's role as infantilized and keep his orientation toward the prison, rather than autonomous and oriented toward society.

First, incarceration removes a person from broader society, separating him or her from community, friends, and family. This segregation severely limits the ways that a person can act out particular identities. For example, the role of parent in our society is

highly dependent upon non-verbal communication through behaviors such as hugs and other endearments, as well as timely disciplinary actions, the sharing of personal values on a regular basis, and significant financial and emotional contributions. Incarceration disrupts and severely limits all these parental requisites through separation and confinement.

Next, imprisonment strips away resources associated with presentation of self. Elements such as clothing, hairstyle, and material-cultural objects like music players and jewelry, as well as particular gestures and other non-verbal modes of expression all contribute to how we express our identity (Goffman 1959). The rich variety of expressive accoutrements that people use to signal their personality are taken away from the prisoner. Inmates are further forced to assume an anonymous outward appearance that is identical to all other incarcerated people via standardized uniforms, thus doubly challenging individuality.

Incarcerates' self-definitions are further challenged by the practical regimes they enact and the very environments they inhabit. The captive society experiences surveillance by prison officers and administration throughout the day, every day of their confinement. Foucault (Foucault [1975] 1995) argues that as a result of specific registration procedures, surveillance, and bodily control, inmates internalize a self-discipline of the body and the mind. An example of such internalization comes from the "Straight Talk" forum on the Prison Talk website⁵:

My two friends and I, who'd been out from behind the wall all of 2 weeks, were passing by an elementary school, and the kids were at recess. All of a

⁵ The Prison Talk website is described in greater detail in Chapter 2, fn 41.

sudden the "recess" bell went off, and all three of us dropped to the ground, landing flat on our asses in a sitting position with our hands on the ground.

The damned bell sounded EXACTLY the way the buzzer sounds when the CO's hit their "panic button" when shit jumps off!

(28421-112)

This is one small, though disturbing, example of an embodied reaction to a physical stimulus of the carceral environment and the profound and long-lasting way that the surveillance regime affects inmates, even after they leave the prison domain.

Despite the on-going surveillance by prison administration, captives are at times out of the sight of the agents of their incarceration. In fact, the greatest presence in a prisoner's life is other prisoners. From living with often-unchosen cellmates in a small space with an open toilet to communal eating, showering, recreation, and programming, the incarcerated experience a near-complete lack of privacy from other inmates. This forced communality never allows prisoners to be alone with their own bodies and thoughts, and it never allows them reprieve from continuous (if mundane) social stimulation⁶.

Goffman (1959) describes this reprieve, this psychological and social space apart from others, as the backstage, where a person can experience solitude and time and space away from acting out their social identity. I argue that the incarcerated in the US today suffer from a lack of privacy in which to inhabit their backstage. Results of this

⁶ The vast majority of inmates are housed in maximum-security or lower level facilities, and they experience the lack of privacy described here. The other extreme are segregation and other isolated detention situations. While less than one-half of one percent of US prisoners are in some form segregated ("supermax") housing that limits contact with other inmates or people outside of the cell to one hour a day, this still amounts to over 80,000 individuals experiencing extreme isolation and sensory deprivation (Browne, Cambier, and Agha 2011)

lack of privacy include shedding sensitivities to the breaking of public taboos of bodily functions and care and the embodiment of social reservations and detachment to create a sense, if not reality, of privacy.

The process leading up to and including incarceration demolishes a person as an autonomous adult, which is perhaps the most serious destruction. It limits the ways an individual inside a prison can interact with other inmates, the prison administration, and visitors. It limits body movements to a degree that is difficult to overstate, even defining how and when to sit, stand, and lie down. It creates a dependency between the confined and the agents of confinement, requiring permission for every movement, every act of gathering information, even communication with another person.

Imprisonment infantilizes prisoners.

Masculine gender identity, rooted as it is in autonomy, strength, and hegemonic heterosexuality (Donaldson 1993; Connell 1995), is severely challenged inside the walls of prisons. Penal institutions are prime sites to witness the intersection of sexuality with structures of power (Connell 1987; Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001a). This is true not just of men's prisons, but also of women's institutions⁷. As such, prisons reveal the universality of gender as a vehicle for control and dominance, in addition to its salience as a personal mode of meaning.

Confinement strips away sexual and gender expression through the denial of safe, healthy sexual relations. It also severely curtails typical gendered expressions of

⁷ For example, research has demonstrated that up to 80% of sexual coercion and assault (from verbal pressuring to rape) of incarcerated women was committed by other incarcerated women (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson 2006; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson 2002; Struckman-Johnson et al. 1996). Qualitative research has demonstrated the power nature of these relationships and the way gender power structures are recreated inside women's prisons (Alarid 2000).

social relations like family configurations and hierarchical positions of power. The results of this vacuum are exhibited through the ways sexuality and gender are used to create (or recreate) structures of power inside. Sex is used as a means of social control through rape in both men's and women's prisons (both as a threat and as a practice). The forced feminization of men through rape or forced submission into a role of "bitch," with or without sexual activity, is an act of dominance, and is telling of social-sexual relations outside the wall (see, for example, Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001a). Similarly, the long history of women forming family groups inside prison with a couple assuming identifiably male/female, father/mother roles also reflects the how strongly gender intersects with social structures in our daily lives (Selling 1931; Giallombardo 1966; Heffernan 1972; Beer et al. 2007).

As noted above, captivity also strips away the ability to act out the roles of active and loving family member and friend through the circumscription of physical, vocal, and written contact with the outside, and at times even the complete prohibition of contact with friends and family. Allowing visitation is a key element in maintaining the bonds of family and friends, as well as having numerous other important outcomes. In a comprehensive study of visiting practices in all fifty states, Boudin et al (2014) find that

... [F]requent, high quality visitation can reduce prison violence, maintain family bonds, break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration, and smooth the reentry process, thereby reducing recidivism rates. In short, smart visitation policies make prison personnel and prisoners safer, decrease crime, save money, and mitigate the damage incarceration wreaks on families and communities. (151-2)

This says nothing of the effect that visitation has on a person's self-definition as a functional member of a family or other social group. Even with visitation rights granted, in the best of circumstances confinement degrades the ability to act out relationship roles.

Finally, incarceration removes the person as a member of society and citizen both through physical segregation, but also through the many legal and civic rights stripped away. Scholars have soundly demonstrated the effects of incarceration on a person's citizenship rights once released. From labor market outcomes (Western, Kling, and Weiman 2001; Western 2006; Pager 2007), to curtailed or permanently terminated voting rights (Manza and Uggen 2006), to temporary or permanent disqualification from a host of federal and state programs such as food subsidies, housing subsidies, and educational grants (Alexander 2010), incarceration has an extensive effect on a person's post-incarceration citizenship. Few consider that this stripping away begins at the first stage of the criminal justice process, during the arrest phase, and continues throughout incarceration. An on-going identity struggle for the incarcerated is thus one simply of citizen.

Just as with all people, men and women detained in prisons and jails are managing their identities and psychological, emotional, and social needs on a daily basis. Prisoners, however, must do this construction and management despite the trauma of identity demolishment and in spite of the institutionalized beliefs and behaviors that recreate and reinforce this demolishment every day. Further, the

incarcerated must try to recreate a sense of self without the everyday materials, relations, and spaces that we take for granted as individuals.

The social and moral order of incarcerated people is thus a direct response to the institutionalized process of identity destruction and transformation. As argued by Douglas ([1975] 1999) and Foucault ([1966] 1994), orders of any type, but particularly moral, are by their nature implicit. The major project of my research is to uncover the implicit meanings and logic of incarcerated men today, which I argue have a direct relationship to identity construction and maintenance inside the prison.

I further argue that the creation of social and moral orders inside the prison, just as everywhere else, occurs through a variety of activities across a variety of sites. It can be seen in the inmate economic system, the social networking within and across the prison walls, through the management of the body, through the coded organization of social and functional spaces, and the interactions between inmates and the prison administration.

The Moral Order of Incarcerated Men

This dissertation raises questions about the very definition of morality and how it is constructed. When speaking of orders, both social and moral, I draw upon Foucault, Douglas, and Wuthnow to frame my understanding. Orders of any type provide the “inner law, the hidden network that determines the way [given things] confront one another” (Foucault [1966] 1994, xx). Therefore, codes provide rules of interaction, but

those rules are usually disguised or unspoken. At times, these orders are visible or articulated, but the meanings they carry are usually implicit (Douglas [1975] 1999, xii).

But where does the moral order in prison come from? I argue that it is a basic framework of free will, sin, and redemption, which is the basis for moral accounts in prison, as well as conventional norms and values widely held in society. All Abrahamic traditions (Jewish, Christian, and Islamic) have the story of the fallen angel, the Jewish and Christian traditions have Cain, and the Christian tradition the prodigal son. In contemporary American culture today the concept of free will, what Wuthnow (1987) calls the intentional, shapes all moral claims. If an act is intentional and transgressive, it is a sin. Yet, all Abrahamic traditions provide pathways to redemption, whether through repentance, prayer, fasting, atonement, or faith in a redeemer.

The stories of the fallen angel, Cain, and the prodigal son are usually implicit among inmate identities, though at times they are explicitly drawn upon, both by inmates themselves and society at large. Most, if not all, incarcerated people believe in redemption, second chances, and personal transformation.

This narrative of sin, forgiveness, and transformation is a fundamental part of the prison as a social institution. Historically and programmatically, the first prisons in the United States were designed as sites of redemption and rehabilitation (see Rothman 1995). Thus the moral history of prisons, of their social and programmatic role, is one of transgression and redemption. Prisons in the United States were designed by the Christian faithful for fallen angels and prodigal sons. The hope then was that through austerity, quiet reflection, hard work, and solitude the human soul would return, like

the prodigal son, to its proper place in society. Today, we see the remnants of this historical beginning in the use of terms like “penitentiary,” “correctional facility,” and “correctional officers.”

Programming, more robust than is often given credit (Phelps 2011), continues the traditions of redemption and rehabilitation, founded on the belief that willing participants can transform their attitudes and behaviors to conform to societal norms. Prison rehabilitative programs rest on the belief that past actions, while they must be paid for, do not have to constrain future change.

We know, however, that within society’s eyes and policies, prisons and the process of incarceration have become much less sites of redemption and much more a place where permanent labeling occurs. Indeed, once conviction occurs and a felony record is created, people become marked (Pager 2007). This marking, like that of Cain, is indelible and carries at times life-long punishments (Western, Kling, and Weiman 2001; Alexander 2010). It is this moral narrative held by broader society, that dictates the political and moral place of the incarcerated and convicted felons in the world outside of the prison.

I argue that the social order of prison is visible through various symbolic, material, and spatial elements of social life. The social order can be read in the uniforms men wear inside the prison (separate ones for officers and inmates), where inmates sit for lunch (different tables for different social groupings), and expectations and tolerance of behaviors. The social order inside a prison is the physical organization of conventions of behavior. But, as Douglas (Douglas 1986) has made clear, such conventions only

become durable orders ('institutions', in her words) when they are supported by cognitive conventions (46). Moral orders are these cognitive conventions.

It is the moral order that grounds the social order. Further, the moral reasoning of inmates operates at several levels simultaneously. It operates at the individual level, guiding perceptions of self and other and thus ideas of and behaviors toward self and other. It operates at the inter-personal level, guiding group-level organization of inmates vis-à-vis the prison administration. And it operates at the societal level, determining the fundamental relationship between prisoner and non-prisoner, society and incarcerated, social outcast and social participant. The moral order of incarcerated men negotiates the distance between the self and society. It provides meaning for behavior and for life more generally.

In fact, it should not be surprising that we see people competing and judging in ethical terms inside the prison, or constructing and expressing their selves through gestures, space, networks, or economic behavior. All over the literature of urban ethnographies we see the constant struggles of morality in the ghetto. Classic work on inner-city moral orders, such as Liebow's *Tally's Corner* (1967), and Anderson's *Streetwise* (1990) and *Code of the Street* (1999), show the manifold moral responses to urban poverty. In works directly related to urban economies, such as Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* (1995), Duneier's *Sidewalk* (1999), and Venkatesh's *Off the Books* (2006), we see the ways that people use moral language to understand and explain their circumstances and behavior.

Yet, given this rich body of work, we don't see identity and morality as specific subjects studied in the prison literature at all, much less through arenas of the market, or food or cell management. This study examines the ways that men see themselves and want to be seen by others. The language that they use is profoundly moralistic, and the picture of life they portray is one of men struggling to maintain dignity and value in the face of profound challenges the self.

Theoretical Justification

People interested in cultural sociology will find in this work extensive examination of the social and moral orders of inmates and the ways in which the two relate. Using the words, actions, and material culture of prison populations, broadly defined to include inmates, officers, administration, and civilian employees, I examine the structural orders of prison life and the ways they are expressed morally through meaning and ritual. I draw upon Wuthnow (1987), Douglas (1973; [1975] 1999; 1986), Foucault ([1975] 1995; [1966] 1994), and Goffman (1959; 1961) to highlight the cultural elements of moral codes, boundaries, rituals, and the body as a site and tool of social, moral, and cultural expression.

Economic sociologists and their fellow travelers will find chapters investigating relational economics, social and economic capital, and internal and bridging networks. These chapters use analytic concepts drawn from Zelizer (2006; 2012), Portes and his various colleagues (1989; 1994; 1998; 2000; 2005), and Granovetter (1983; 2005; 1985), among others.

Finally, those interested in prisons will find across all chapters a discussion of contemporary American prison life as it stands today. It will expand current knowledge by providing a fresh perspective of prison social life, broadening the understanding of prison populations to include officers, administration, and civilian workers, embedding the prison within broader society, and creating new categories of analysis, those of conflict and reconciliation and the inside–outside dynamic.

The classic era of prison studies existed from the 1940s through the 1970s with the work of Clemmer ([1940] 1958), Sykes ([1958] 2007), Goffman (1961), Irwin ([1970] 1987), and Jacobs (1977), and even into the 1980s with DiIulio (1987). These texts form the basis of how we understand incarceration. They describe the often fascinating roles inmates construct for themselves, posit the source of those roles as results of the deprivations and pains of incarceration (Sykes and Goffman) or as the result of importing norms and behaviors from the outside (Irwin). They also elucidate the ways that prison administration can shape the social order of the prison (Jacobs and DiIulio).

In all of the classic studies of prison life, there is very little work which describes or explains power structures, instances of disorder, or adaptation at a micro-interaction level. That is, the previous work does little to explain how the inmate roles and particular behaviors interact with each other. Also, much of the early work focused on role typologies, sacrificing the idea of identity as comprising multiple roles as described in the sociological and psychological literature. There is no work on the various identities taken up at any given time by single individuals. A single individual could identify as gang member, son, boyfriend, seller, hustler, user, student, and religious

follower at various times. This research seeks to redress these flat, one-dimensional images of inmates and inmates' social worlds.

The works of classic prison study are limited in their explanation of the moral order that inmates create among themselves, how they are related to their identities, how they express them with each other and, crucially, with members of society who are not incarcerated. The prison as an institution embedded in broader society is imbued with moral meaning. Those who inhabit the prison as inmates are considered criminals, violators of the social contract, and people who have willfully given up rights associated with citizenship, even, for some on the outside, rights associated with humanity. At each particular facility, moral orders are constructed in interaction among the inmates, the inmates and officers, the inmates and the broader administration, and the inmates and those they come in contact with from the outside. Very little of the classic studies thoroughly examined these relations.

Given the difficulty of securing administrative cooperation for participant observation, it is not surprising that relationships between the guards and inmates are not particularly described. Goffman (1961) describes a situation of strong division between guards and inmates, a relationship of impersonal domination of the former against the latter. Conover (2000) provides the only outsider's account of a guard's experience in a prison, and clearly demonstrates the variable nature of guard-inmate relations. I add to this scarce landscape by including material drawn from formal and informal interviews with and observations of officers to complement the primary material drawn from the incarcerated participants of this study.

Other studies have proven to be informative to this project although they do not address total institutions specifically. Bourgois's (1995) study of life in El Barrio during the crack epidemic touches on issues related to identity (respect, in his terms) and its effect on motivation and behavior. Duneier's (1999) study of printed material merchants on the streets of New York inspired the original dissertation project, which was solely study of economic activities of inmates. His work demonstrates ways in which economic activity can shape identity and act as an expressive action (Fernandez-Kelly 2005) and the way identity can influence behavior, economic and otherwise.

Given the difficulty in observing or quantifying illegal and/or informal activity, and the difficulty in researching total institutions as a non-member, it is not surprising that the existing literature on economic activity inside total institutions is minuscule. Radford's (1945) study of the economics of a P.O.W. camp is perhaps the most widely-known. Other brief, non-theoretically oriented treatments of prison economies have been conducted by non-economists as well (Guenther 1975; Kalinich and Stojkovic 1985; Lankenau 2001; Bassett and Blanchard 1977). Typically these studies try to document the existence of an informal market, most usually for cigarettes. Journalistic accounts (Conover 2000) and self-reports (Santos 2006) indicate that economic activity is robust in prison, covering far more than the stereotypical, much-fictionalized markets for cigarettes, drugs, and sex.

Using the Prison as a Site of Study

Wacquant (2002) and Simon (2000b) have noted that there has been a dramatic absence of prison studies precisely since the time that hyperincarceration began in the early 1980s. Prison administrations took a turn to warehousing (Irwin and Austin [1994] 1997; Simon 2000a) and broader society took a punitive turn (Garland 2001; Simon 2007; Brayne 2013). Thus the very nature of incarceration as an institution has changed since the last major study of a prison was conducted. For academics and researchers, this has meant virtually no ethnographic work on prisons has been conducted in the last thirty years.

This study begins to fill this long-standing lacuna. It builds upon the classics of the genre, using their insights as guideposts. However, I extend previous work considerably by examining the moral characters of these incarcerated men, often called monsters. Further, I connect the social and ethical order to broader society, arguing for a contextualization of the prison as an institution.

Methodology⁸

Qualitative research is ideal for uncovering the hidden and implicit meanings of observed patterns and order. I use interviews, observation, document review, and personal experience to gather multiple points of data to develop a “thick” (Geertz 1973) picture of incarcerated life. The ethnographic material that is presented throughout this

⁸ All research conducted for this dissertation was approved and monitored by Princeton University’s human subject Institutional Review Panel and Massachusetts’ Office of Research and Planning.

dissertation is not composite material, but individual accounts that represent the spectrum of incarcerated life and ways of coping with dehumanizing and demoralizing environments.

The qualitative material presented in this study is drawn from nine months of observation and interviews in a Massachusetts medium-security men's prison, MCI-Shirley, from November 2011 through July 2012; supplemental administrative file review conducted at that facility; six months of participant observation in a NJ medium and maximum-security men's prison from October 2007 through March 2008; and personal experience of incarceration in a county jail.

Following from contemporary reflexive ethnography (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1999), I examine the data for the emergent patterns among observable cultural material. I use the theoretical foundation outlined earlier in the chapter as compliments for analysis, but I have examined the material for endogenous meanings and order rather than seeking absolute conformity to existing theoretical constructs. I highlight both where the data support existing ideas and also where the data diverge from current knowledge.

Field Site

This research is studies to incarcerated men serving two or more years in prison. Medium-security prisons are ideal research sites as they ensure an adequate length of sentence (unlike jails) to ensure that an inmate has become familiar with the particular nuances of the facility. I approached, and was denied by, departments of corrections in

Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. In late 2011, Massachusetts Department of Corrections Research and Planning Division agreed to host the research.

In addition to being placed in a medium-security facility, there were other criteria used in site selection. The facility should serve a general prison population. Thus facilities within the Massachusetts Department of Corrections (MADOC) serving exclusively mentally ill, physically incapacitated, or drug rehabilitation populations were excluded.

There are five medium- or medium- and maximum-security facilities in Massachusetts that meet the criteria outlined above. The final site chosen was MCI-Shirley, a medium-security facility that is on the same grounds as Massachusetts' largest maximum-security facility (Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center) and a minimum-security facility. MCI-Shirley comprises two separate complexes, one a minimum-security facility and one a medium-security facility "up the hill." At the time of study the minimum-security campus housed roughly 320 inmates, and the medium-security facility housed approximately 1,200 inmates⁹.

Semi-Structured Interviews

While direct observation of behavior is an ideal form of data, given the security requirements and secretive nature of prisons, it is a rare form of data. The research design uses self-reported knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to compensate for the

⁹ Table 5 in the appendix provides descriptive statistics for the population of Shirley Medium and Minimum facilities.

limited first-hand observational data. This self-reported data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with inmates and staff. The primary data was gathered through eight months of interviewing forty-six inmates. Each interview averaged ninety minutes, for over four thousand minutes of interview material, approximately seventy-percent (33/46) of which was recorded. Some interviews lasted only twenty minutes, others occurred over two or three sessions, totaling two to three hours. Full transcriptions of recorded interviews ranged from 485 to 1205 lines of text. Table 4 and Table 5 provide descriptive statistics of the interview sample and the population at Shirley.

These interviews followed guidelines to help steer the conversation toward the specific interests of the project, specifically life histories, daily life, economic activity, incidents of disorder, and elements of identity. Questions asked included, "Can you tell me about your life before you came here? What is a good day for you? What is a bad day? How do you manage your time here? Do you have contact with folks on the outside? What was the last disturbance that you can remember? Do you remember what it was like when you first entered?" Nevertheless, interviewees often used these open-ended questions to tell elaborate life histories, describe complex personal ideologies, or adhere to a single particular narrative rather than address the scope of the questions.

The use of interviews with both inmate and non-inmate populations (officers and administration) helped secure a well-rounded picture of attitudes, beliefs, and practices

within the facility, as well as offer corroborating – and sometimes complicating – information for the research analysis.

Sampling for inmate interviews involved two types. The first form of sampling involved a probability (random) sample of inmates. The administration provided a roster of all inmates housed in the facility from which every tenth inmate was selected, creating a probability sample of 180 names. Inmates were initially asked if they wished to participate via a letter delivered by myself, or, if I was not able to enter the block, the block officer. Of thirty-seven inmates approached this way, thirty agreed to an interview and seven said “no” or “not sure,” for a successful response rate of only eighty-one percent. Of the seven declines, three declined because of lack of English. I was not able to interview all of these men, but did draw from the pool of “yes” responses as part of the sample. This is initial sample recruiting method only pulled from the first two blocks that I sent letters to – blocks A-1 and A-2.

Under the direction of the Programs Administrator, the protocol changed so that the randomly selected inmates were called to the interview room during movement and asked directly if they wished to participate in the study. Using this method, one person declined outright, one person declined because of an inability to speak English, and thirty-four agreed to the interview for a response rate of ninety-four percent. Using this method I selected from the 180 inmate random sample haphazardly, making sure to include inmates from each of the blocks A through F (except the D block, the drug treatment block, who were not allowed to be interviewed). The combined recruiting

methods (letter and calling into the interview room) created a selection of thirty-seven randomly selected inmates¹⁰.

Six other interviews were solicited using snowball sampling. Interviewees and program officers each had unsolicited suggestions of others inmates they thought would be good interviews. Similar to the second protocol of randomly chosen inmates, these suggested inmates were called into the programs building and given the informed consent speech before asking if they would like to participate.

I interviewed inmates, unobserved, in a room in the programs building. An on-duty officer was at the end of the hallway, but the interview was conducted without outside observation. When interviewees felt they had more to say than the time allotted would allow we scheduled a follow-up interview.

Non-inmates were observed and informally interviewed as well. These included conversations with corrections and program officers in break-rooms, at lunchtime, and during off hours. Informal interviews were also conducted with mental health professionals and administrative personnel on site.

Participant Observation

A critical component of the research relies on participant observation of currently incarcerated people as they negotiate their daily lives. The author, as a woman, could not be incarcerated with males in these facilities. However, the author has experienced short-term incarceration in a female facility (ten days in NJ). In addition, preliminary

¹⁰ Of the pool of 192 randomly selected inmates: seven agreed to an interview but were not interviewed by the time the research period ended; seven were released before the interview request could take place; ten were transferred before the interview request; one person died before the request; and 114 inmates were not contacted before the end of the field work in any way.

observations as a volunteer in a NJ men's prison allowed for significant information to be gathered through observations of daily life and informal discussions with both inmates and staff.

Participant observation at the MCI-Shirley was overt, as a known non-facility researcher. The spaces for observation were limited but meaningful: I was allowed to observe for two months inmates from the program officer's office embedded directly in the housing units and, weekly, from the correction officers' podium directly in the housing units. Other observations of the inmates were conducted during special programs in the visiting room and during daily movements.

Observations of officers occurred during my time at the facility not interviewing inmates and during meal times. I was allowed to interview inmates for one and one-half hours in the morning and one hour after lunch. At other times I worked on notes in the programs office, shadowed officers, observed officers in the disciplinary office and programs areas, and worked in the administration office. I was alert and aware of my surroundings during my time in the prison regardless of location in the facility.

Observations of administration occurred during several administrative meetings that I was allowed to sit in on during my early months of research, including a climate meeting, a classification meeting, and an observation of staff access, an hour after lunch when inmates can address concerns directly to the administrative staff.

Finally, I was allowed to shadow a mental health therapist on two separate occasions, including one-on-one meetings with inmates in distress and case-review

meetings with the mental health staff as they evaluated individuals they had seen since the last meeting.

Supplemental Research

The research was inspired by six months of volunteer work inside a men's medium and maximum-security facility located in New Jersey. This work included helping the kindergarten- third grade-level class, the GED class, as well as conducting my own classes in writing and poetry. These months gave me critical access to inmates during their programming time which was under my direct supervision without the immediate oversight of officers or administration.

While this volunteer work is not part of the data that makes up this research, it critically shaped my awareness of the nature of the prison ecology and alerted me to critical questions of identity and economics there were as yet unanswered by the literature. That experience also alerted me to the variations that exist across prison facilities. As DiIulio (1987) has demonstrated, prisons vary considerably in their "climate" – what we today call the environmental, social, and personal tenor of an institution, and I was able to directly observe such variation through my experience in New Jersey and in Massachusetts.

For example, I was regularly forbidden to enter the prison in New Jersey because the facility would be on full lockdown after an inmate disturbance. Such lockdowns would last from an hour to several days. I would guess at least twice a month, if not more often, such a situation would occur. In my entire time at Shirley there were only three disturbances that limited movement on separate occasions, and only one time the

prison was on full lockdown. The initial disturbance happened within a week of my arrival and it limited movement initially for just fifteen minutes. A second disturbance immediately after the movement was released caused movement to be halted again, and it was cleared within twenty minutes for all non-inmates, but the inmates were in their cells for a twenty-four-hour lockdown. A third disturbance that halted movement occurred two months later. These were the only disturbances that halted movement that I was witness to.

This is an example of the variation in violence of the environment I felt between the two prisons, and I mentioned it frequently in the interviews. Inmates at Shirley often corroborated my intuition, calling MCI-Shirley a “soft” camp. Elaboration on this description is provided in Chapter 1.

Other sources of insight come from autobiographical material and creative writing produced by inmates, material gathered through other researchers, and a personal experience of incarceration in a local jail.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized as follows:

Ch 1: The Captive Landscape: The Prison Setting

This chapter describes the prison environment, from its historical context within the broader spatial and temporal landscape to a detailed, textured description of the inmates’ space. This includes an accounting of the organization of the administrative order and a detailed order of the days of an inmate’s life confined.

Ch 2: Responses to Institutional Order: A Typology of Inmates

Incarcerated men must negotiate among multiple and sometimes conflicting social and moral orders in prison. This chapter describes the implicit meanings and explicit manifestations of the prison administrative order and the ways in which it intersects with the inmate social and moral order. Then it demonstrates the various ways in which inmates and the prison administration enact resolution and reconciliation of fundamental, implicit conflicts of orders. This chapter examines the interaction of categories of people, and it highlights variation of inmates across two axes: whether they are actively in conflict with the prison administration or reconciled with it, and whether they have an internal or outside orientation.

Given the specific nature of identity demolishment that occurs through the process of incarceration, a number of responses are predictable. The (re)creation of identity in the face of this demolishment can be explained as individual responses to the institutional conflicts described in the previous chapter.

Ch. 3: Embodied Incarceration: Managing the Body and Space in Prison

Incarcerated people are constantly managing their bodies. This chapter explores the practical and symbolic management of the confined body and how it reflects various identities and meanings. In particular I examine management of the body and space through the cell and the chow hall and through food preparation and cleanliness. I also provide evidence of the ways that prisons dominate inmates' bodies and mind long after their incarceration through ingrained control.

Ch. 4: The Relational Economics of a Confined Life

Prisons, like all social life, are filled with economic activity. And, just like all social life, that economic activity is both formal and informal. This chapter explains how the inmate economic order utilizes formal and informal relational economics, in the forms of social and economic capital, circuits of commerce, and the expressive economy, as a part of the broader social order. This chapter also demonstrates how we can see the moral order of inmates through their economic activity.

Conclusion

Concluding remarks provide a review of the dissertation, contextualizing it within the broader fields of criminology, culture, and economics, as well as linking it to greater political debates. I also present some implications of the research and potential further research.

1 The Captive Landscape

This chapter details the setting and history of the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Shirley (MCI-Shirley). After a brief description of the town of Shirley, Massachusetts, I provide an intimate portrait of the material, temporal, and administrative environment of the prison. A textured, spatial description of the prison is followed by a description of the various populations that comprise the prison, including inmate, security, programming, and administrative groups. Next, a detailed account of the order of the day is provided. This physical, organizational, and temporal setting is the captive landscape.

Shirley, Massachusetts

It takes an hour and twenty-minute train ride from South Station in Boston to reach the third-to-last stop on the Fitchburg line, Shirley. The stop has a small, open-air, unheated shelter that provides some minimal protection from the wind, snow, and rain during the long, cold New England winters and some shade in the sunny, green summers. The stop is located on the roughly east-west road, aptly named Main Street, which runs through Shirley. Across the tracks to the north of the shelter is a small road lined by single-family multistory homes and a hardware store. Looking south across Main Street one sees the greenery of the small park and yet more homes. A half-mile to the east is

the community's library branch, which shares a parking lot with the town municipal buildings. Across the road from the library is the elementary and middle school complex that the town shares with a neighboring community.

Those interested in visiting MCI-Shirley must begin their walk along Main Street to the west. There are no buses that pass through Shirley, and those without a car must journey on foot to the prison. A short trek along the road past residences, sometimes interrupted by a storefront church or a barber shop, leads one to the first of three convenience store/liquor shops in the town. This convenience store also includes a hot and cold sandwich deli, a lunchtime draw for those employed in the area. Within sight and across the street are the local laundromat and gas station in this no-stoplight town. Directly across the street from the laundromat is the second convenience store, the owners of which also own the laundromat.

Here, between the parking lot serving the convenience store and the parking lot serving the adjacent businesses, is a wooden bench shaded by a mature tree. It is the only official outdoor seating in this village, and it allows two or three people a comfortable place to take in the sunshine and watch the slow trickle of community life. Most often the bench is the meeting point of any of a handful of veterans who live in or around Shirley, and thus they have dubbed it informally as "Veterans' Bench."

From the bench, it is easy to watch town youngsters walk or local cars drive into the small retail strip that includes a pizzeria, the third convenience/liquor store, and a dry cleaner adjacent to the US Post Office and a bank. Finally the town ends with a Dunkin' Donuts and a Chinese fast food restaurant, located less than half a mile from

the train station. Two bars are situated on small roads off the main road — one a few feet to the north of the street, the other to the south. This is the totality of downtown Shirley, from the municipal and library buildings through to the Dunkin' Donuts, a total of almost exactly one straight mile.

The rest of the sixteen square miles of the town comprises the homes of its residents, the firehouse, the few religious buildings of the community, and the country greenery of the landscape. One could easily characterize this community as sleepy. The town website accurately declares Shirley as “a slice of quiet, small town life, with rural ambiance” (“Town of Shirley, MA,” n.d.).

The town was once home to a small Shaker community, which died out around the turn of the twentieth century. The town was also once home to a paper mill, which has also died out. The site of the mill is now an office complex, and the old mill house a privately-owned apartment building located next door to the Chinese restaurant at the end of town. This is where I resided, just a twenty-minute walk to the prison site.

Beyond the Town: Secured Space

A fork in the road at the Dunkin' Donuts side of the town leads those prison-bound away from Main Street toward the complex that houses MCI-Shirley and MCI-Souza Baranowski. This road curves to the south past the firehouse, past a handful of typical New England homes, past a quaint, tiny cemetery, finally encountering an open gate about a mile from Main Street. There a sign is posted indicating that the road beyond is

for correctional personnel only. Although the gate is always open and unmanned, it is the first indication that what lies beyond is a community apart.

On the east side of the road is a large grassy expanse, donated by the Department of Corrections to the Shirley community for use as a sports field. Along the west side of the road a long, sloping hill runs all the way to the end of the complex property. Here, on the northern edge of the property on this slope, improbably, cows are often at pasture, joined in the fall and spring by wild turkeys and other local fauna. Another half-mile down the road clusters of cottage-like buildings, parking lots, and signage finally make their appearance.

To the west of the road, “up the hill” as the incarcerated and employed say, is the complex that is MCI-Shirley Minimum. At the top of the hill is the main building, flanked on either side by cottages used as residences, program buildings, and administrative offices. To the east, down hill, is the much larger, and much newer MCI-Shirley Medium. Just south of MCI-Shirley Medium¹¹ is the maximum-security Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center (SBCC), the newest addition to the Massachusetts Department of Corrections.

The first prison in Shirley, MA was the minimum-security facility, opened in 1972 (“Annual Report” 2011). Prior to 1908, the land was owned by the local Shaker community, who sold it to the state when they closed their community (Shirley Historical Society Museum, n.d.). From 1909 to 1972, the site housed the Industrial

¹¹ MCI-Shirley technically refers to both the medium-security institution and the minimum-security institution up the hill. From this point on, Shirley is used to reference only the medium-security site of MCI-Shirley, which was the site of study. When reference is made to the minimum-security facility, it is done so explicitly.

School for Boys, a boys' reform school. This prior use explains the presence of the cows, a holdover from when a small farm was cultivated as part of the reform school program. The Department of Youth Services (DYS) shut the school down in 1972 due to notorious treatment practices (Masis 2009). It was almost immediately converted to a minimum-security prison.

A second, medium-security prison was built down the hill and across the road from the minimum site, and opened in 1991. The two facilities were operated independently until 2002. Now they are run together under a single superintendent and administrative structure. A separate superintendent oversees SBCC, which was built in 1998.

From the road it is easy to get a survey of the orderly arrangement of buildings and spacious layout of Shirley that is provided by the rural location (see Figure 1 below). The perimeter of the large, east – west oriented rectangle that is the medium-security prison camp is delineated with two chain-link fences topped with coiled razor wire separated by about three feet. The space in between the two fences is known as no-mans land, and any amount of force can be used against people caught there. In addition to this double-fence external perimeter, another fence delineates the internal perimeter, the area where the inmate living units are located. Between the internal and external perimeters are the various program and administrative buildings. Guard towers occupy the southwest and northwest corners, and the north-central and south-central locations. The eastern third of the camp comprises the recreational fields.

The first buildings starting from the western side of the external perimeter are the industrial programs (industries) building to the south and the special management unit (SMU) to the north. The industries' building is a large, warehouse-like structure where the construction and electrician programs operate, as well as an OSHA certification program, and a wheel-chair repair program. This is also where the facility recycling program is housed. The SMU, to the north, contains the solitary confinement units, the small, fenced yard for SMU recreation time, and the facilities to process solitary detainees.

Next to the industries building is the combined visitors' room (VR) and internal perimeter security (IPS) offices, which are just below the connected employee and inmate eating facilities (chow halls). Just north of the eating facilities is the health services unit (HSU). Running along the southern internal perimeter are the program buildings, which comprise the program and classification administrative offices, classrooms, and facilities for various religious groups, the barbershop, the weight room and gym, and the sew shop. Along the northern perimeter are located the six large housing units.

A close examination of the control of movement through the facility tells a silent story about the various functions of the people who make up the population of Shirley. Outside the double fence to the south is the main entrance to the facility. This building houses the waiting area for visitors and the administrative offices for the superintendent, treasurer, and clerks, as well as all of the administrative files for the men currently incarcerated in the medium and minimum institutions. These people

functionally have no reason to enter the prison camp, either at the external perimeter or through the internal perimeter.

To leave this building and cross the double-fenced outer perimeter requires passing through security “traps” – small rooms where a person passes through various security procedures. There is one trap for civilian visitors on one side of the security control center and another on the opposite side for prison employees. I entered through the employee side. Visitors and employees alike are examined for contraband by passing through metal detectors, being scanned by hand-held detectors, being pat down, and having any personal materials that have been approved for admission into the facility checked visually. After exiting the room to the outside, an electronically-controlled gate allows access through the double-fenced external perimeter to just outside the combined visiting room (VR) and internal perimeter security (IPS) offices. Moving beyond the VR/IPS building requires passing through another electronically-controlled chain-link fence topped with razor wire. This gives access to the programs buildings that are outside the internal perimeter of the facility.

Yet another chain-link fence separates the programs buildings from the rest of the camp. This fence is the internal perimeter, and it is not electronically controlled. Instead, it is guarded by a correctional officer who alone has keys to open it. From this point, a person has direct access to inmates in their daily life, from their eating and work areas to their health facilities to their living quarters. Within the internal perimeter are a number of other chain-link fences that intersect the open space. These are typically

open, but can be closed and manually locked in the event of a serious security breach, such as a riot or escape.

Movement through the prison camp is thus controlled according function in the prison. Purely administrative functions are housed in a building outside of the double-fence outer perimeter. Employees in this building rarely pass through the security traps into the prison area. The facility superintendent's offices are in this building, and she will enter the prison camp at least weekly for staff access periods (described below) or to personally review the prison. Administrative personnel have the option to eat lunch in the employee dining facilities, which are located inside the internal perimeter, but in my time there this was not the norm. Instead, a few of the employees would purchase the food available and take it back to the administrative building. The others would bring their lunch and eat it in the break room available to them in the building.

Next is the visiting room, which is the only approved site for non-prison affiliated people. This is located inside the external perimeter, but outside the internal perimeter. This is a major security-conscious site, as much of the contraband that enters a prison comes in through the visiting room, according to the officers I spoke with. It is not a surprise that the personnel responsible for investigating breeches of the internal perimeter, IPS have their offices directly attached to the visiting room.

People employed by the state as civilian workers and volunteers for prison programs work in buildings also located within the outer perimeter but outside the second, internal perimeter. Similar to the visiting room, this is a location where the "outside" and the "inside" meet. Volunteers and civilian employees are not directly

associated with the security and containment functions of the prison. As such, they are in a liminal space, both physically and functionally.

Finally, within the internal perimeter are people associated with the daily functioning of the facility's security and inmate life, including correction officers, correction program officers, and civilian health professionals (nurses and psychologists). The correction officers (COs) and the correction program officers (CPOs) both constitute a unionized class of workers in direct contact with inmates and charged with the safety and security of the inmates and facility. They, along with the inmates, are the main constituents of the internal perimeter. Like all civilian employees, the health care workers also occupy liminal functions that are not directly related to security and control.

Massachusetts Department of Corrections (MA DOC) describes a medium security facility as one where,

...the perimeter and physical barriers control offender movement and interaction. The design is characterized by high security perimeters and use of internal barriers. Internal procedures are designed to restore some degree of responsibility and control to the offender. ("Annual Report" 2011)

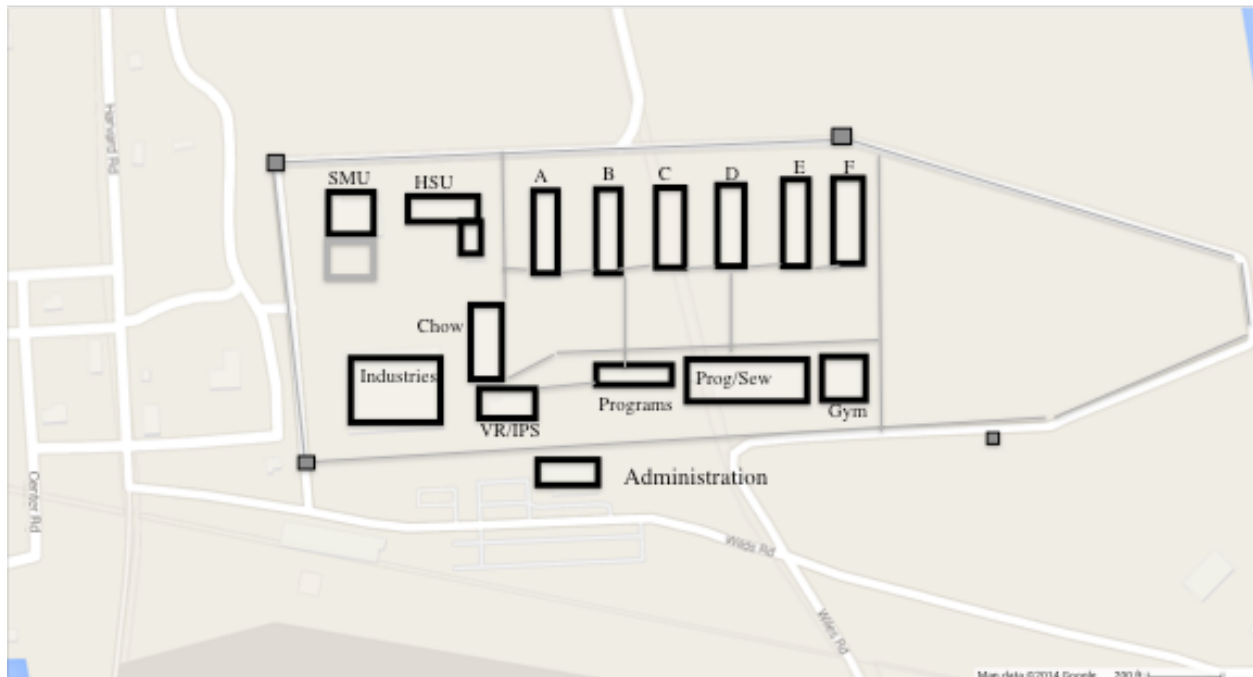
This description accurately describes the basic physical security environment of Shirley. The chain link fences control movement through the camp by design. There was a near-riot in 1995, and as a result the internal intersecting fences were erected.

Several inmates complained of the fences and the way the prison was run. At least seven times in my interview questionnaire marginalia I noted when inmates, unprompted, mentioned Shirley being run like a maximum-security facility or Shirley

having its own rules. When I asked Michael, a twenty-five-year-old serving three years for a probation violation, to tell me about Shirley, he declared, “This place sucks! They – it’s a medium but they run it like a max.” He *was* in prison, I reminded him. Why should two or three additional chain link fences bother people so much? He mumbled something about, “Yeah, well, it’s not right. Other level-four camps aren’t run like this.” This sentiment was echoed by Eddie, in for a drug offence, when he told me Shirley was “like a minimum max,” meaning a lower-lever maximum-security facility.

A couple of days later, Don, the head of the CPOs, asked me how my interviews were going. I laughingly mentioned to him the comments about the fences. He surprised me by saying, “They’re right, we do run a tighter ship here.” It was then that he explained to me that the additional fences were a result of the near-riot. He added that the close association with the maximum-security facility next door also meant that Shirley was run with more controls.

Figure 1: Shirley Medium-Security Complex



Shirley's Soft Climate

As mentioned in the introduction, Shirley presented as a considerably less violent prison than prisons I had experienced in New Jersey. There were fewer disturbances, the disturbances that occurred were “cleared” (movement was released to continue as normal after suspension) within fifteen to twenty minutes rather than hours, and I never saw inmates with black eyes and cuts like I did in New Jersey.

I talked about the differences in prison climate (the procedural, social, and emotional tenor of an institution) with several interviewees, and they many confirmed that Shirley was a “soft” camp. Stephen, a guy in his twenties serving time for manslaughter, gave me his explanation for it:

EE: Here, at Shirley, ... are there guys who are more disruptive than others?

Stephen: I mean, no really. I mean, by all accounts this is a soft camp.

EE: What's that mean, "soft camp"?

S: Exactly as it sounds. People are soft. They don't do nothing. There is some lifers here, but they're all docile now. They've been down for a while. They're not looking for problems. Even the gang bangers, they just came down from the max, they're all like, 'we're falling back, we don't want to go back there.' ... Here, if somebody said something slick you could walk away from it. And people wouldn't really look twice about it. There [in the max], if somebody says something slick and you walk away – you *have* to fight.

According to Stephen, the main drivers of the docility of Shirley are the high percentage of people serving life sentences and the desire to avoid returning to a maximum-security facility.

According to the July 1, 2012 institutional fact cards (available through the MADOC Research and Planning Division and online; see Table 5 for population statistics for Shirley Medium and Minimum), fifteen percent of Shirley is serving life (including life with parole). However, that is including the minimum population, and in Massachusetts no one serving life can be housed in a minimum setting. Thus, when accounting for only the medium-security facility in the denominator, Shirley's lifer population is over nineteen percent. This is a considerable portion of the population, nearly one in five of the residents.

When compared to other facilities, however, this is not the highest proportion. For example, at Souza-Baranowski, the maximum-security facility across the parking lot, fully twenty-three percent of the population is serving life (fifteen percent serving life without parole). SBCC is a maximum-security facility, however, and all people

sentenced to a life sentence of any type must spend at least two years in a maximum security setting. When looking at other medium-security facilities, Shirley still does not have the highest proportion of people serving life.

The state hospital, Bridgewater¹², has thirty-four percent of its population serving life (45/131). Norfolk, an exclusively medium-security facility has over forty-two percent of its population serving life (632/1500), while Old Colony has over twenty-one percent (172/805). On the other ends, Gardner has over seventeen percent, (174/986), Concord (130/1344) and Cedar Junction (73/867) both have less than ten percent, and Framingham (the state's all female institution) has less than eight percent, (50/665). Thus Shirley is in the middle-range of proportion of people serving life population.

That said, comments from inmates indicated that Norfolk was a desirable place to go, in part because it was a quieter camp, in keeping with Stephen's theory that a higher lifer population keeps facilities "softer." Dominic, a man in his eighth year of an eighteen-year mandatory sentence, told me that OCC (Old Colony), Gardner, Norfolk, Bay State, and Shirley were all "passive" facilities. These are the very facilities that have a high proportion of inmates serving life sentences.

With respect to disturbances, Jaimie corroborated my observations that there were relatively fewer disturbances at Shirley than at other facilities¹³. He claimed that

¹² On July 1, 2012, Bridgewater housed 378 commitments. Of those housed at the state hospital, 247 were civil commitments, and 53 were criminally sentenced (inmate workers), 64 were civil commitments who also had criminal sentences, and 7 were infirmary inmates, for a total of 131 criminally sentenced residents.

¹³ See "Supplemental Research" section in the Introduction for a comparison of my experiences in Massachusetts and New Jersey.

up in the max, where he had served two and one-half years of his three-to-five year sentence for attempted murder and kidnapping, there were freeze ups (stoppage of controlled movement by security) five or six times a day. “Here, there’s a fight once every two months.” While surely Jaimie is exaggerating about the number of disturbances per day at the max, he conveys his intended point that Shirley is a much quieter facility.

The Prison Ecology¹⁴

While many people think of a prison as being populated by inmates and officers, in fact prison populations are much more diverse. Non-inmates are not a monolithic group. There are three major classes of non-inmates inside Shirley, and inside all prisons: the officers, the administration, and everyone else. By far the largest groups are the inmates and officers, but prisons also have administrative staff, health care providers, program providers, educators, plumbers, electricians, grounds keepers, and kitchen staff, some of whom are state employees, others contracted civilian employees. There are also volunteers, who are often religiously identified. Figure 2 provides a basic organizational chart that includes all officially recognized prison personnel.

As a non-state employee, non-volunteer, I was outside of the normal prison ecology. I was not a typical civilian, as I was given considerable latitude of movement

¹⁴ Data on the percent breakdown of employees throughout this section is taken from the *Annual Report* (“Annual Report” 2011) produced by the Massachusetts Department of Correction (MADOC). This can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Research by request.

and access to inmates in one-on-one situations. Yet I was also clearly not a part of the ordained non-inmate system. This position made it easier to observe some of the sub-populations of those inside the prison, but it came with difficulties. I had no natural affinities inside, and thus was an outsider everywhere I went. Observations were always highly visible, and there were few times when I was a natural part of the scene around me. And yet, given that prisons are always places of guarded behavior and general mistrust, in many ways my experience was commonplace, both for the captives and those employed to care for and manage them.

Suspicion is the air that is breathed inside a prison, circulating among all its population. The all-pervasive suspicion is between the inmates and all other groups of people inside the prison. There is always the question of what inmates are doing, plotting, or trying to get away with. Similarly, inmates are always suspicious of each other, assuming that everyone is trying to take advantage of any weakness seen or gather information to be used against someone for gain later.

People unfamiliar with the prison ecology often do not know that among non-inmates there are distinct groups and wariness of others is felt across and between these groups. Officers, who are held responsible for security and control, are suspicious of all other employees, especially the civilian employees and the volunteers. These are people who have ready access to the outside, are not inculcated through training or unionization into solidarity with the officers, and their functions may be counter to or, at least, not directly serving of the security and control mission of the prison.

Administrations build suspicion into policy by assuming the worst in any given situation and eliminating any formal discretion in procedure.

This base suspiciousness of the administration and officers of everyone else can pervade the prison, such that every interaction comes in to question, and every decision is scrutinized. For example, while volunteering in an education program prior to my field research, I received from an inmate class member a note stating his amorous admiration of me. I waited twenty minutes for the class to finish, and then I took the note to the teacher. He immediately called in his superior, and they both asked me why I had not turned in the note immediately. I thought I was going to be praised for my quick and discrete reporting of an innocuous note, when in fact I was criticized for it. There was immediate suspicion that I had prompted the interaction, and that perhaps I was susceptible to his advances because I did not turn him in the moment I received the letter.

An example of the way that suspicion is built into the culture of Shirley through procedure and how it affects even non-inmates occurred a little over two months into my fieldwork. During the morning gathering of people in the administrative building, one of the correction program officers (CPO) was talking to a colleague in hushed tones. He said that some sort of administrative personnel had cleared out a desk of a departed employee and found a pill. The administrative person pursued it as a possible narcotics case, involving IPS and superiors, and it could result in termination of the employee (who had simply moved positions to another facility). The person telling the story was very upset by the fact that the administrative person was treating this as a narcotics

case, and there was considerable tension in his voice. He seemed to be trying to keep his relaying of the story discreet by telling only one person at a time and using a quiet voice. It was not until he had told three or four people that I was able to piece the details together. The person whose desk was being cleared had worked in the programs building, and it was not clear that they knew any of this was happening. Further, one of the people said it was Tylenol or some sort of cold pill.

The CPO was using many hand gestures and had a very frustrated tone of voice. It was clear he found this level of scrutiny unwarranted. While I understand the policy that requires reporting of unknown substances, it was clear that the discoverer of the pill had some discretion in whether to simply discard the pill and leave it unreported or whether to pursue this as a narcotics case and engaging considerable bureaucracy. The default tenor of a prison is one of suspicion, through policy and action, even among its employees.

Below I describe each of the non-inmate classes of people inside the prison. Each group serves a different function in the prison and characteristics that are common to such groups throughout any correctional facility in the country. Each group also has distinct interests, which are delineated further in Chapter 2.

Correction Officers

The officers and administration are state employees, and they are the ones held accountable, by the state and the public, should something go wrong. The correction officers function as a part of the security and custodial regime. Their interests thus lie in minimizing – if not eliminating – security disturbances and breeches and maintaining a

docile inmate population that is quiet and responsive to their control. At Shirley, the officer class is in fact two distinct groups with separate, and thus sometimes conflicting, interests: correction officers (CO) and correction program officers (CPO). This section describes the primary body of COs. The next section discusses CPOs.

The COs are a unionized group making up nearly three quarters (73.8%) of MADOC staff, and through the union they are able to voice their group interests vis-à-vis the state. Even if their daily assignment is in the administrative building, they wear a uniform which includes a DOC shield. This shield is on all officers clothing, including the shirt, jacket, or hat that an officer may wear. The importance of this shield made itself known when I wore a winter hat given to me by an officer on a cold day. There was an audible grumbling from the inspection officer as I went through the trap the next morning with it on, and I asked one of the correction program officers (CPO) with me what the problem was. He said, "He's just upset that you're wearing a hat with a shield on it when you're not an officer." I was surprised and embarrassed, and I made that known. "Don't worry about it," the officer said, "some people take that stuff too seriously here."

The above incident made clear that the visible insignia of the officer group represented not simply a form of paid labor, but a self-conscious identity that was not to be assumed by others without proper credentials. As I describe in greater detail later in this chapter, the shield is a visual symbol of organization and power, and was recognized as such by the exchange described above. Only unionized officers are supposed to wear the insignia, and I was not such a person. Wearing it was perceived

as “wrong,” and the tone of voice used by the person first noting it was such that I had clearly offended him.

Officers identify as a particular group individually, but also socially. For example, two days after my arrival at Shirley I was invited by an officer to attend their shift’s officer holiday party. Because at least one of the three shifts would be working at any given time, parties were held for each shift separately. Organized among the officers, the day-shift party was located at an area bar and open to any officer who worked at the facility, although in practice only day-shift officers showed up. Further, no other non-officer employees were there. My attendance was, unbeknownst to me at the time, widely noted. I had only been officially at the field site for one week, and nearly every one was both curious as to my presence and very wary.

That these correctional officers regard themselves as a closed group is hinted at by the fact that no other employee types were at the party. It was also evidenced by the reaction I got when I attempted to take pictures of the party on my phone while I was there. The picture taking was done in the spirit of festivity and in intent similar to any picture taking that might happen at any company party. It was not in any way an attempt to “document” the party for research. Immediately one of the party attendees, presumably a male officer, kept asking anxiously, “Why are you here?” It turns out that I had taken a number of pictures of him and, I suspect, he thought I was researching him and the party and acting more like an Internal Affairs agent trying to investigate some sort of wrong-doing. I deleted the pictures from my phone right in front of him, but he still had a wary sound in his voice when he said, “Okay” afterwards. I almost

immediately forgot about the pictures and began socializing with some other group of partygoers.

The Tuesday of the following week, as I was making my way through control procedures in the employee-side trap, a female CO asked me, "So you're the one taking pictures?" I said I wasn't taking pictures, thinking she was talking about the day before (Monday), when I was waiting for my ride to pick me up to take me home after work and I was playing with my phone. She said I needed to always ask about taking pictures of COs. I remembered then about the reaction of the CO at the holiday party, who repeatedly asked me what I was doing there, and then who watched me delete my pictures. Later that afternoon, when I was leaving the programs area, a different CO was running the trap, and he said, "I heard you were taking pictures." He said, "we don't like people taking our pictures when we're out socializing," with an accusatory tone.

It was clear by then that I had got on the wrong side of the COs. I should have been more careful about my introduction into a new social group. After that time, I repeatedly saw the CO from the party who watched me delete my pictures, often at lunchtime. He would look at me very suspiciously, and he never said anything to me. I considered going to more senior officer who was well respected by Jackson and Smith, the two officers in charge of the block of which I was conducting observations. I thought perhaps I could try to build up some good will by talking to him about what happened, but I realized it was the wrong way to go about it. I needed to build up respect and some semblance of on my own, through my own actions, and in direct

relation to the corrections officers themselves. While I cannot say that I ever got the full confidence of the majority of officers, once I was more cautious of my actions and deferential to the officers, my interactions improved significantly.

Correction Program Officers

The officer class itself is not without its divisions. Aside from typical distinctions by years of service and rank, the MADOC officer system also has an unusual position called the correction program officer (CPO), which make up six percent of the DOC staff. CPOs experience the same training as COs, but they also have either two years experience in social work, counseling, or treatment or a bachelors or masters degree in a related field. The CPO at Shirley is an officer embedded within the living unit in addition to the one or two corrections officers (CO) that are on duty. They are the liaisons between the classification system, programs, parole board, various services in the correction system, and the inmate.

Their main function is in the classification system. They conduct entrance interviews, obtain criminal histories, and document the inmate's yearly progress through the incarceration system. Their reports on inmate progress are what classification systems use to assess what level of security the inmate should be placed in, and parole boards use their evaluations as a part of their decision-making process.

While the CPOs are by training and job category part of the custodial regime, they are in effect a distinct group which socializes separately from the correction officer group. For instance, during mealtimes the CPOs leave the housing units where their offices are located and eat with each other, either in the programs building's break room

or at a separate table in the employee canteen. They are familiar with the COs, and at times interact with them at lunch, but this is the exception rather than the rule. They also have a schedule that is unlike any of the CO schedules. They work a rather traditional 8:00AM to 4:00PM. COs, on the other hand, work in one of three shifts, from 7:00AM to 3:00PM, 3:00PM to 11:00PM, or 11:00PM to 7:00AM. Thus, the COs and the CPOs do not start or end their shifts together, and do not have the critical periods of inconsequential but social conversation before or after their shifts.

Although CPOs train with correction officers and have spent some minimal amount of time in a correction officer position in active prison in the MADOC system, there are some who do not identify in the custodial position. An example is a CPO who was being told by CO how to operate the switchboard at the podium in the inmate-housing block that controls the inmates' cell doors. In the event of an emergency, the CO wanted her to be able to shut all of the cell doors if necessary. The CPO replied, "I don't want to have anything to do with that." This despite the fact that the job description states,

...[E]mployees in this [CPO] series also maintain custodial care and control of inmates, patrol correctional facilities, supervise community work crews; observe inmate conduct and behavior; investigate suspicious inmate activity, and respond to medical emergencies.

As another indication of silent separation between these groups, none of the CPOs showed up to the day-shift officer holiday party I attended a week into my entry into the field.

Administration

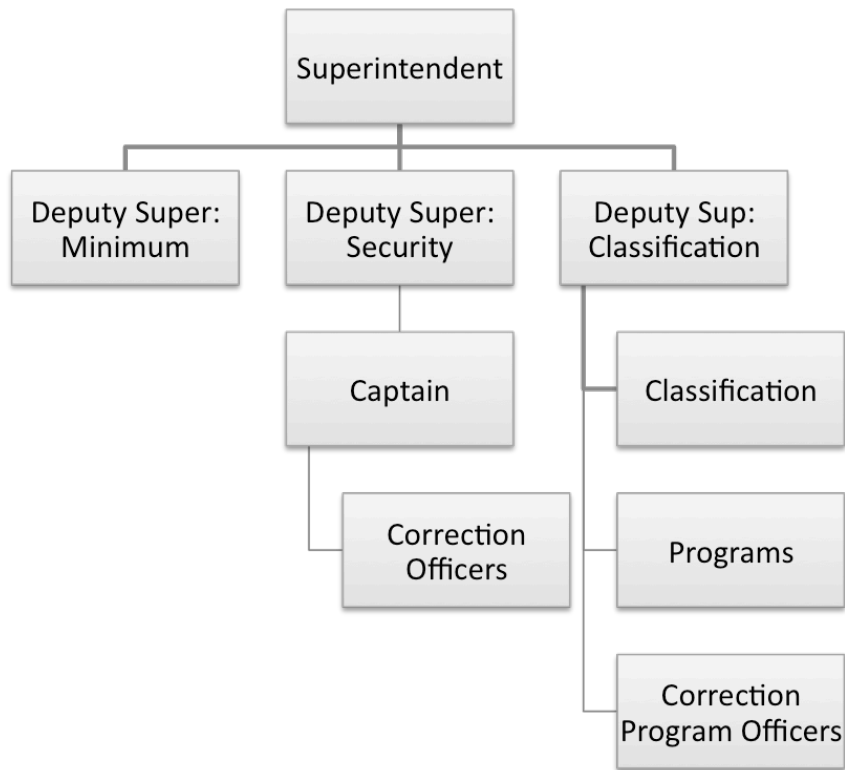
The administrative command personnel, making up six percent of DOC staff accounting for managers, various levels of superintendents, and CO captains, are separated from the officers by a number of elements. Administrative command positions have no specialized group training, often working up to administrative positions through various tracks. Some prison superintendents, for example, have never been a correction officer, instead having worked up through programming authority positions. Administrators can work in various functions within the classification regime, which oversees inmate classification, programming, and parole; or in security, which oversees the officers; or in operations, which oversees the logistical functioning of the prison. They have a typical schedule, usually 8:00AM to 4:00PM, but their administrative duties may take them away from the prison site. They often have very little contact with the other employees, civilian or officer. One officer, O'Brien, stated, "I haven't met the new super since she's been here," which was approximately four months at that time, and this made him feel like she did not prioritize security staff in her work.

The administration operates under an administrative regime. Bureaucracy and distance from inmate life characterize this regime. Unlike COs, CPOs, and civilian employees who work in programming or health care, administrative personnel rarely if ever come into contact with inmates. Their interests are the smooth bureaucratic and logistical running of a facility with little or no disruption. Their career trajectory can lead them to the administration of an entire facility as a superintendent.

Civilians

The third non-inmate group is anyone who is not an administrator or an officer. This is a varied group, including state employees who work as administrative support staff (9.3%) and state employees who work in specific services, such as building and grounds maintenance (3%) and education (1.7%). This group also includes state-contracted personnel, who are people not direct employees of the state (often found in various program positions and health care, especially mental health), and the volunteers who visit the inmates, typically for religious guidance. What makes this class a coherent group is that they are considered “civilian.” Other than an on-site orientation intended to prepare a civilian for working in a security-minded environment, this class has no specific group training, and virtually no security training. Like the administrative class, all civilian employees have a typical work schedule of 9:00 AM to 5:00PM. They rarely eat with the officers in the employee canteen, instead eating in their respective work areas outside of the double fenced perimeter.

Figure 2: Basic Organizational Chart of Shirley Employees



Symbols of Organizational Structure and Power

What I have described above is the organizational structure of the non-inmate populations of the prison. This structure is based on function, although there are some overlapping responsibilities among the groups. The category of people that has the highest degree of contact with the inmates is the officers. This is a group that half a century ago sought out greater prestige and therefore organized their labor through unionization and professionalization.

Similar to a movement in policing in the 1950s, prisons and corrections attempted reforms starting in the 1960s and 1970s in order to be perceived as

professionals (Grant 2004). These reforms included changes in recruitment to attract more women and educated candidates, formalized and standardized training, the addition continuing education, and the adoption of a quasi-military organizational form¹⁵. While there remain barriers to complete professionalization of the prison officer occupation at this time, the corrections field nevertheless strives for professional recognition, greater autonomy in the state bureaucracy, and occupational legitimacy (Jurik and Musheno 1986).

One result of this professionalization is that corrections officers now shun the term “guard,” something I learned within my first week of observation and interaction at the prison. On Friday of the week I started I was talking to two of the block officers in the unit I was observing. A third officer came in, the grievance officer, and he cautioned me that I wouldn’t leave the same person I came in as. I started talking about “guards” having hard work and what I had learned about “guards” from reading Conover’s *Newjack* (2001). Officer Smith waited until I finished and said, “That’s an old term” in a calm tone. His partner, Officer Jackson, chimed in, “Yeah, it’s corrections officers.” Adams, the grievance officer, then added, “Call us correction officers, like all official documents.” I stood corrected in polite and friendly, but very clear terms.

The above interaction echoes what Conover (2001) experienced on his first day of training academy for the New York Department of Corrections. A sergeant responsible for his and his classmate’s training stated,

¹⁵ Note that both Bittner (1970) and Moskos (2008) argue that the very paramilitary framework that is used in policing limits individual autonomy and decision-making, two hallmarks of professionalization. While corrections seeks to align itself with law enforcement, and by extension the military, in its organizational form, the consequences of that structure may run counter to the overall goals of the occupation.

And notice I said `correction officers,' not prison guards. There is no academy for prison guards. You are here to become professionals. (15)

Conover describes a training academy that mimics military boot camps. Trainees are required to stand at attention, do push-ups as punishment on command, keep spotless dorms, shine shoes, adhere to a "military bed-making fetish" (17), maintain silence during mealtimes, and run in formation while "chat[ing] military songs adapted to corrections" (36). The standardization of appearance, rough treatment of trainees, and formalization of training echo the boot camp style of the military, but do not match it perfectly. Conover reports that two his training class who had military backgrounds, "... assured those of us who hadn't been in the service that the Academy was 'nothing like' a real military boot camp" (31).

Two of the corrections officers I spoke with had wanted to enter into law enforcement, but could not, due to the strict requirements and testing, and it is clear that corrections has followed policing in its attempt at professionalization through training, organization, and symbolism. For example, police training is similar in nature, according to Moskos (2008). It occurs over six months at an academy, involves physical training including running in formation, singing cadences, and push-ups as punishment, and follows a "strict, military-inspired 'chain of command'" (8). Moskos explicitly links this form of training to a profession-level desire to emulate aspects of the military. Moskos argues that "... police organizations continue to perpetuate a myth of quasi-military professionalism" as a result of institutional conservatism and a desire "to control the rank and file" (25). The military model was adopted by law enforcement because it was expedient and uncomplicated at a time when the police were seeking out

reform and professionalization. Bittner (1970) argues that the quasi-military structure of the police can be understood in terms of shared methods – both use force to accomplish their goals, and both have a shared need to for strict internal regulations. He goes on to argue that this organizational form, however, actually detracts from the police officer's ability to act independently and creatively in the field, something Moskos agrees with.

We can understand the adoption of the paramilitary organization and training by corrections officers through its similarities to the police and the military. Being a corrections officer requires the use of force and strict internal adherence to rules and regulations. Certainly corrections officers are trained to think of themselves as always at risk and in conflict with inmates. I participated in a two-day orientation for civilian employees, and even this non-corrections officer workshop included videos of actual violence in the prison by inmates against officers and the use of force by officers to gain physical compliance by the inmates.

Correction officers have adopted the ranking system used by the military as well. I discovered how meaningful this ranking system was when speaking with an officer, O'Brien, about a month and a half into my field research. I mentioned to him an observation about a CO I had made the previous day, and he asked me who I was talking about.

EE: I don't know his name. He was new to me.

O'Brien: Well, was he a sergeant? A lieutenant?

EE: I don't know.

O'Brien: You're ignoring the bars! You're ignoring rank!

A similar situation happened when I addressed a CO who was in charge of training as “Officer Michaels” when his title was in fact Sergeant Michaels. I was corrected immediately.

Prison officers wear specialized uniforms for a number of reasons. They emulate a police-style and military-style of training and dress in order to emulate the organizational form. First, it is an outward symbol of their organizational form, calling to mind the regulation and hierarchy of the military and police. It marks them as a group with distinct membership that requires training and specialization and thus as a professionalized occupation. It also distinguishes them from other employees who, unlike the officers, are non-unionized.

The uniform, like the title “corrections officer” rather than “guard,” aligns officers with the law enforcement community. In fact, in a few states (California, New Jersey, and New York) corrections officers have similar arrest-making and arms-carrying rights as the police, being sworn peace officers. For the majority of corrections officers, however, they are not formally aligned with law enforcement, so they make the alignment informally through clothing style, symbols, and procedures.

The importance of this alignment cannot be overstated. The link between working with “dirty” things and being inherently dirty is deeply rooted (Hughes 1958). However, even as the police are in a “dirty” profession (Bittner 1970; Drew and Hulvey 2007; Gassaway, Bob M. 2007), they are often regarded as carrying out noble work protecting and serving society. Correction officers as a class must endure significant dirty work, which can be interpreted as a social taint (Tracy and Scott 2007), and they

do so without the widespread recognition of protecting society. That they attempt to ally themselves with the symbolism and structure of policing and the military is unsurprising.

The uniform and its clear symbolic similarities with the noble professions of law enforcement and soldier is an attempt to mitigate the effects of “dirty work” and elevate the status of correctional officers. That corrections personnel are striving to align themselves with the police, often seen as a dirty profession itself (Dick 2005) is telling of the low status corrections officers hold.

The uniform, however, serves another purpose. Officers, in their high contact with inmates and their ubiquitous association in the minds of the public with prison management, are required to be a canvass for the symbols of power of the carceral institution, and the symbols they chose are directly drawn from law enforcement. The crest they affix to their uniform, caps, shirts, and jackets is that of a shield, similar to that of any law enforcement agency in the country. Correction officers are responsible for the custody and control of inmates, yet the inmates perceive them as law enforcement figures. In many of my interviews inmates referred to the COs as “cops.”

Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5 demonstrate the clear correspondences in uniforms among the US Army, a Massachusetts police officer, and an Oklahoma corrections officer¹⁶. Note especially the similarity in symbols of power (the shield used by both the police and corrections officers), organization (the use of bars or chevrons or

¹⁶ All images are from an image search for Creative Commons-licensed imagery for non-commercial reuse (public domain). Unfortunately, no Massachusetts correctional officer uniform images were available. Their symbolism is the same as that shown in the images provided.

stars to denote rank), as well as likenesses in decorative elements, such as the use of shoulder tassels.

Non-dress uniforms are also modeled on the military and law enforcement tactical teams (themselves based on military uniforms). The utility belts they wear are similar in style to those worn by police and the military, as is their footwear and uniform style. Even the choice of color, typically blue or brown, evokes the colors city police, county sheriffs, or the military. Dress standards are similar to those of the police and military, including short or pulled back hair, tucked in shirts and trousers, shiny shoes, and properly aligned uniform elements. All of these visual cues are meant to call to mind the police or the military and the attendant power they wield as institutions of social control and violence. Although correctional officers are not permitted to carry weapons inside the prison, they are allowed to use physical force when necessary. The uniform, through its careful reproduction of symbols are meant to evoke this force in the minds of the public and inmates.

The symbols of power that the officer wears---the crest, the bars indicating rank, the belt and the shoes---are all in clear distinction to the inmate, whose clothing is designed specifically to obscure gradations of ranking or power or individuality or style. Any marking on inmate clothing is a violation of prison rules. Serge, an inmate with a friend in the sewing shop, had a small “A/E” sewn on to the pocket of his shirt to mimic the branding by Armani Exchange. As soon as this was discovered by the cellblock officer, he confiscated the shirt and the inmate was written up in a disciplinary report. In a similar incident, Damien, who you will hear more from in Chapter 3, had

his state-issued coat was taken away because he had marked it with “D-block,” his street nickname. In the disciplinary report the infraction was listed as “destruction of state property.”

In another example of restricted clothing, Eddie, halfway through his twelve-to-fifteen year sentence for drug trafficking, had a vest he had made confiscated by the COs when he was wearing it in the visiting room. He claims that he had made the vest over two years ago, but it was confiscated once he wore it at a visit (previously he had not worn it in this area). He claims that he had the same CO for the previous two years. The disciplinary report stated, “Possessed altered clothing in the visiting room – sweater modified into vest.” This is evidence not only of the limitations on outward appearance of inmates, but also of an inmate’s attempt to look presentable for his visitors, which was punished¹⁷.

¹⁷ It is also an example of one way I verified inmate accounts of their lives.

Figure 3: US Army Dress Uniform



Figure 4: Boston Police Uniform



Figure 5: Oklahoma Corrections Dress Uniform



The Temporal Environment: Ordering the Days and Weeks

Three categories of events punctuate an inmate's day – count, meals, and movement. Around these events an inmate shapes his hours, days, weeks, months, and years. The pattern of a prison day is a metronome, and many inmates find a change or disruption of their routine, however subtle, particularly disturbing.

The day begins with the first count of the day at 7:10AM. This is the first of four official counts, called standing counts because they require the inmate to stand inside their locked cell. The inmates are given a warning, and thus, according to O'Brien, "There is no excuse not to be standing"¹⁸. Inmates are expected to be on both feet, not moving, and facing the small window in their cell door. Any deviation from this expectation is an actionable offence that can be written up in a disciplinary report.

Standing counts take approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. The counts must be done manually by the officers on duty and entered into the computer system. The numbers come in through the computer system, but humans review them on paper as a check and balance system and in case there is a computer malfunction. A captain or lieutenant must then manually count and "clear" (approve) the totals and sign off on them. Once all units have tallied their numbers and accounted for all of their inmates, count is cleared, typically at 7:30AM, which allows cells to be unlocked and inmates to exit their cells into the general housing area.

At 7:40AM breakfast is served in the dining hall. Those who receive insulin are released from the units first in order to get their insulin before they eat their meal. Then

¹⁸ This basic control of the inmate body by the prison regime is explored in greater detail in Chapter 2.

inmates are released by housing unit to the dining hall, such that at no time are all the units in the hall at the same time. This is done both for logistical purposes, because not all of the inmates can fit into the dining hall, but also to help limit security risks. The dining hall is a site notorious for fighting and inmate assaults, because it is one of the places where inmates have access to others who are not in their living unit. Some time between 8:30AM and 9:00AM breakfast is finished.

The first movement occurs at 9:00AM. Mealtimes are, in fact, a form of movement, though the term is not used for mealtimes. Movement describes the times when inmates are officially allowed ten minutes to move from one authorized location to another. For example, many inmates participate in some sort of programming or work assignment, and movement is when they are allowed to travel to and from those assigned areas. Movement is also the time when inmates can go to health services unit to be seen by a nurse if they have an appointment, or go to the weight room if it is their unit's assigned day and time. There is not enough equipment in the weight room to meet the demand, so the administration has assigned units to the room at different times of the day, either morning after breakfast or afternoon after lunch.

For those who do not have an appointment somewhere or who do not participate in some sort of programming, movement only indicates that the cell doors are open and that they can move about the housing block somewhat freely. This free movement in the housing block is called "tier time."

A second movement is called at 10:00AM. At this time, again, inmates can relocate from the housing block to programs, the health services unit, or respond to

calls for appearance before the disciplinary officer or a representative of the parole board. Inmates who were previously at these locations can now return to the housing unit.

A final morning movement is called at 11:00AM, but this movement is specifically to have all inmates return to their housing blocks. Once movement is over, all inmates are locked into their cells and the second standing count of the day is conducted at 11:10AM.

Sometime around 11:30 lunch is called. As during breakfast, the units are called in separate groups. Which units are called first alternate according to a schedule, so that all units have a chance to be at the front of the line. Depending on what the chow hall is serving, lunch might go until 1:00PM, on other days lunch may take only forty minutes. When I asked why such a discrepancy in times, Officer O'Brien explained,

If they have sweaty baloney, it will finish in forty minutes. If they have something good, everybody shows up. If it sucks, not everybody shows up. Plus, if it's a sandwich it doesn't take as long to eat.

For those who choose not to go to chow, they "lock in" to their cells but this does not happen immediately. While the cells are open for inmates to leave for the chow hall, an inmate might go to another's cell to exchange food items bought from the canteen, for example. Once all of the inmates have left for the chow hall, however, all remaining inmates must enter their cells, which are then locked for the duration of the mealtime.

Once lunch is completed a fourth movement is called at 1:00PM. This is followed by a movement at 2:30PM, 3:30PM movement, and a 4:30PM return movement to cell blocks.

At 4:50PM the third standing count is conducted.

At approximately 5:10PM dinner is served. The evening meal is typically the quickest, unless there is a special meal being served. Many inmates chose to forgo the institutional dinner and make a meal from items bought in the canteen (called commissary in some systems). An analysis of the importance of food and food preparation is given in Chapter 3.

Inmates return to their housing blocks after dinner and lock in until 7:00PM, at which time there is an evening movement. This movement allows inmates to attend evening programs (often religious in nature, when civilian volunteers can attend), make necessary visits to the health services unit for evening medication consumption, or leave for evening work shifts, such as kitchen cleaning, building maintenance, or yard work (especially when snowing). This also allows inmates to stay in the block but outside of their cells.

There is a return movement at 8:00PM for all inmates but those who are receiving particular medical treatment. A final movement occurs at 8:45PM for all inmates.

At 9:40PM the entire institution locks down and a final standing count is conducted at 9:45PM. At this time inmates remain in their cells until after the following morning standing count at approximately 7:00AM, starting the daily cycle over again.

Few exceptions are made to this schedule of cell lock-ins and movements. Some prisoners receive specialized medical treatment, such as dialysis, which requires that they go to HSU in the middle of the night. During snowstorms, inmate workers may be

called upon to clear snow or salt roads. Or an incarcerated person may have to leave for a court appointment or work before the first standing count. For the most part, however, inmates are locked in their cells from 9:45PM until 7:30AM the next morning, nearly ten uninterrupted hours of being confined in a small space on a bunk, whether in a single-person or two-person unit.

An inmate structures his day within this framework of counts, meals, and movement. Like most structures, they become taken for granted. Days at Shirley become broken up into mornings and afternoons. For example, Antoine describes his typical day as follows:

I wake up in the morning, do some sit-ups and push-ups. In the morning I'll do some exercise or I'll read a book on business management. I don't play cards any more, or gamble or anything like that. In the afternoon I'll read some more in my cell or meditate.

This routine, involving exercise, reading, and playing cards or gambling (though given up in this case), is typical of most routines. There are few elements around which to structure days. Programming, exercise, reading or television, and card playing are essentially the only non-employment activities available to inmates, and often these are not available.

Programs have waiting lists in all prisons, including Shirley. In fact, because there is higher demand for programs than availability, inmates must be within the last two years of their sentence in order to qualify for most programs. This creates a structural incentive for inside-oriented behavior, described in greater detail in the next chapter (Chapter 2).

Time management, such as that described above is critical to creating a life inside the prison walls. Xavier, a 31-year-old from the New Jersey/New York area told me about the importance of his routine:

I try to utilize every hour, every minute. I have a schedule. ... It's more structured [in a New Jersey or New York prison]. And I'm kind of a product of that. So I have a structure to my day. My day's, you know, the reading, the working out, the writing. Just trying to find balance to my day. There's always those times when I rest and I nap. But, um, for the most part it's like a very intense schedule.

Routine can become profound for inmates. Xavier described his schedule as "intense," even though it consisted primarily of reading and writing. The intensity of the routine is not in the type or even the quality of activity, but in the fact that it covers the entire active day and distracts him from his immediate condition as an inmate.

A member of the officer class confirmed the importance of routine as well, during my visit to the Special Housing Unit (SMU) – commonly known as "the hole." I was introduced to an officer working there by the mental health caseworker I was shadowing. When the officer learned I was "writing a book" about life inside a prison, he stated that he wanted to write his own book, "but they'd never allow it." When I asked him about some of the things he had learned over the years, and the first bit of wisdom he gave me was that inmates hate having their routine disrupted.

Routine is critical for time management for inmates. Disruption to that routine has negative effects. After standing count in the morning, cell doors are unlocked and inmates can exit their cells. This means they can queue for the telephone, go to programs, or go to meals. If a standing count is delayed, then a scheduled phone call with a loved one can be missed. Stephen explains:

When something like the freeze up that happens, this morning happens, you might not — now, I was supposed to use the phone at around 10:30, talk to my girl, I'm not going to be able to do that. You know what I mean?

Disruption to routine can mean missing a scheduled visit, which is a considerable financial and time inconvenience to the people visiting. Disruption can be a reminder to the inmate that he is not in control of his schedule, of his life.

It is important to discern, however, the difference between routine and monotony. Routine helps a person manage stress and time in prison. It can help a person with very little resources maintain connections to loved one through scheduled calls and visits. But it is not the same as monotony. Monotony creates boredom and listlessness, whereas routine creates structure. An example of the difference came from Alex, a young man convicted of drug possession:

Alex: I workout all day and go from — I never stay on the same block for too long.

EE: You don't stay on the same block. When you say you don't stay —

A: Like, I always find a reason to go to a different block.

EE: Why?

A: Because when you stay in one place too long it gets boring. You started to get used to everything that goes on there.

Alex values his routine — he was able to describe it to me very clearly: he worked out every day from 1 to 3:30PM then came back to the blocks to bathe then get on the phone. He had visits most weekends as well.

EE: What's a bad day like?

Alex: ... I don't really have bad days in here, 'cause the way I structure my days, it goes so beautifully.

Hi routine was clearly valuable to him. He was able to describe a good day clearly: “Good phone call... Nice good workout. Good TV show. Good sleep. Like, I got a regime for how I go through my day.” Yet he also craved variety and as a way to deal with boredom, which he managed through relocating housing blocks.

I asked Stephen, from above, why he was interested in being interviewed. He stated,

‘Cause it’s different. (What do you mean different?) Well, I do the same thing everyday. You know what I mean? I even watch most of the same television programs in the afternoon everyday. So, to have something different, I mean, where it wouldn’t be flipping my whole life around. Like, the only think I could do that would be different would be get a program that I have to do three times a week or join the CRA program. You know what mean, so, it’s a change.

This came early on in the interview. Yet, noted above, he later stated that disruptions to his routine caused him stress and frustration. He also notes, even as he’s talking about a desire for something different, that this interview was something that “wouldn’t be flipping [his] whole life around.” Stephen was one of several who stated that the interview was a way for them to break up their day or to bring something new to them. I asked seventeen interviewees upfront why they agreed to the interview, and the most common answers were “curiosity” (four), to have something different to do, and to tell the side of the inmates to a researcher (three each)¹⁹.

Nevertheless, while routine is what people use to get through the sentence, there are those who embrace monotony. An example of this can be found with Fabian, a man

¹⁹ People often mentioned more than one reason. Other answers included wanting to talk to a woman (two), “that it sounded interesting” (one), that they misunderstood the call (thought it was the parole office) but came any way (one), “to be a part of something” (one), and to read his poems to an audience (one).

in his late twenties convicted of a weapons violations serving six-year sentence. When I asked him what he missed from the outside, he said, “Just being free. Doing stuff I like. My family. Women.” I followed up asking if it had been tough serving his time so far, and he said,

It has, but I’ve gone to, like the point where—I don’t know. It’s not numb, ‘cause I feel this every day. But it’s like, I’m in a routine. So, it’s like, I try to stay—not feel it basically.

While he does not want to use the word numb, it is clear that Fabian uses his routine to create a lack of sensation, a lack of engagement with the prison world. He does not seek variation as much as escape from the prison reality.

Shirleyworld

Several inmates called Shirley “Shirleyworld.” For them it meant the totality of the rules and regulations that people had to abide by, formal and informal, and all the personalities that existed inside Shirley. Bob, a man in his sixties serving life without parole, told me that the term “Shirleyworld” was painted on a mural inside the SMU (a fact I was not able to corroborate). He emphasized that “they have their own rules here,” meaning the administration. The fact that this medium-security facility was run more strictly would give rise to an inmate saying, “That’s Shirleyworld.²⁰” I use the term here to represent the totality of the physical layout, the people inside, and the order of days.

²⁰ I noted no less than three inmates using the term “Shirleyworld” in my interview marginalia.

In this chapter I have detailed the spatial, organizational, and temporal landscape of Shirley Medium prison. The spatial layout of Shirley is of a newer prison built in a rural area. The facility has an open plan in which the inmate are housed in six spatially independent housing blocks, which are separated from independent buildings housing the chow hall, gym and programs building, health facilities, and industrial programs. Its rural location and new design allows it ample outdoor space. A double perimeter fence surrounds the entire campus. The location is within walking distance of a minimum-security campus and a maximum-security facility as well.

This spatial layout is accompanied by a control of physical movement, one which is dictated by types of people: inmates, security staff, administration, and civilians (employees and volunteers). Inmates are confined strictly to the inner perimeter, and security personnel control movement of inmates and all other people. While civilian employees are allowed within the outer perimeter of the prison (the first fence), only security and administration is permitted within the interior of the facility.

The population ecology of the prison comprises the inmates and several non-inmate groups: administration, security personnel, civilian employees, and everyone else (volunteers, researchers, visitors). This population ecology is itself differentiated. Chapter 2 goes into detail about variations in inmate identification, and this chapter demonstrated the division of security personnel into officers and program officers. These populations vary in professionalization and institutional power, and there are symbols of these variations and organization in the way people dress and how their movements are controlled in the prison.

Finally, I provide a detailed description of the days of an inmate. In particular I highlight the nature of routine and how it differs from monotony in the prison. An inmates day is structured around the facility's need to keep account of his whereabouts at all times. As such, standing counts (counts when the inmate is standing at attention before a corrections officer) and other counts are what punctuate an inmate's day. Movement about the campus is dictated by these counts, a sort of metronome of days, weeks, and months.

Now that we have detailed picture of the landscape of Shirley, I turn to more closely examine the inmates who are the primary subjects of this study. The next chapter examines the various groups outlined above, paying attention to their organizational characteristics and their interests. I develop a typology of inmates that places them along two axes: their degree of reconciliation with the administrative order as a power-holder and whether the inmate orients himself to the world inside the prison or the world beyond.

2 Responses to Institutional Order: A Typology of Inmates

This chapter is concerned with the administrative order and inmates' responses to it. Below I discuss the relevance of the use of ideal types and typologies as an analytical method and my contribution to inmate typologies. I then review the organizational literature relevant to institutional orders. Next, I describe the administrative order of the prison including its characteristics, its organization, and its interests. I argue that inmate behavior and identity can be understood in part as a response to the administrative order, which falls on a continuum between being in conflict or in reconciliation with it. I then detail the individual inmate orientation, whether to the prison and life inside it or to the streets and life outside the prison. Finally, I construct a typology of inmates cutting across these two dimensions: response to the administrative order and whether the inmate has an inside or outside orientation. Illustrative descriptions of actual inmates are used to highlight positions in the typology.

The classic literature of prisons studies is rife with ideal types of inmates, categorizing them according to their criminal role (Irwin [1970] 1987) or by their functional role in the prison society (Sykes [1958] 2007; Sykes and Messinger 1960). I argue that these classifications are too simplistic, and rest on a vision of an inmate which is completely divorced from his or her relationships to non-inmates and rest on a very narrow understanding of the carceral order. What I present below is an analytic

ordering of inmates that sees them as individuals within a class that has scant power vis-à-vis the formal order of the prison²¹, and thus must respond to that order as either in reconciliation with it or in conflict. The typology also takes into account the critical characteristic of modern punishment and carceral life in the United States today – that it is based on separation from society physically, if not also emotionally and politically. While Sykes and Goffman have argued that the social world of people inhabiting total institutions is a function of deprivations, I want to argue that a key feature of inmate identity is whether they have their cognitive and social reference point located in the prison or beyond it.

The value of using typologies and ideal types has been established since Weber's ([1904] 1997) first explication of the power, function, and meaning of ideal types. Following Weber, the inmate types that are created at the intersection of the conflict-reconciliation/orientation framework outlined below are not meant to perfectly correspond to each inmate in a prison. Instead, it highlights the organizational structure of the prison and the power of the administrative order. Inmates' responses to the administrative order, whether in conflict or reconciliation, are a major factor in understanding social and moral behaviors behind bars. Second, it brings to the fore how structure and personal characteristics can combine to result in an incarcerated person's daily orientation as either that of convict or community member.

Furthermore, the typology given here does not suppose that inmates are only responding to the administrative order. Inmates, at any given time, may be responding

²¹ Although see Scott (1985), and the section on grievances below.

to inmate codes, programming goals, or personal connections to the outside. As stated above, however, the administrative order is the dominant organizing force in a prison, and as such inmates *must* respond to it in one way or another.

Finally, it must be said that inmates may be positioned at one place in the typology at a given point in time and then in another place at another time. Certainly there are reasons to believe that the amount of time served and length of sentence both have influence over an inmate's response to the administrative order as measured by officially documented misconduct²² (Flanagan 1980). Again, the intersections of the conflict-reconciliation/orientation continuum provide ideal types, and it should be expected that any correspondence with actual inmates' lives might be contingent and temporary.

Conflict and Reconciliation across Institutional Orders

Institutional orders are the totality of the formal rules and regulations and the informal rules and regulations that shape expectations, behaviors, and meaning in a particular organization and the ways these policies, procedures, and organizational structures are grouped by classes of people. The official rules and regulations, structure, and job roles in a prison are all oriented toward the institution's function of custody of the incarcerated, their care, and the security of both the prison and the society beyond.

²² The literature on predictors of prison misconduct is vast and constantly being enlarged. The quality of much of the literature is middling. Flanagan (1980) provides an excellent analysis of time served and prison sentence length and their relationship to misconduct. Gendreau et al (1997) review previous meta-analyses of misconduct studies and find time served is a significant factor in misconduct, but they do not consider changes over the course of an inmate's sentence. Cunningham and Sorensen (2006) provide an analysis of long-term and life-without-parole inmates, finding that the latter are a stabilizing force in prison.

Institutional orders in a prison include the administrative order, the correction officer order, the inmate order, and the civilian order.

In a prison the institutional order of the administrative regime is the authoritative organizing order. The administrative regime has formal power over the custodial/security regime of the correction officers, the classification/treatment regime of the classification personnel, and the civilian employees and volunteers throughout the prison. They determine the particular procedures and policies of the facility. They also are the absolute authority in decision making when ambiguous situations arise, or when existing policies and procedures do not account for a particular circumstance.

We know, however, that wherever there are formal rules and organization there will most certainly be attendant informal rules and organization. Classic works such as Dalton's (1959) *Men Who Manage* demonstrate that organizations rely not only on formal organization but even more so on informal rules and organization in order to function. Meyer and Rowan's (1977) "Institutionalized Structure: Formal Organization as Myth and Ceremony" showed how formal structures and procedures can be adopted as part of isomorphic organizational shifts for legitimacy, and yet narratives and meaning (myths and ceremonies) develop around those formal structures to help bridge the gap between them and the need for informal rules and structures when those formal orders do not contribute to organizational goals. Kanter's (1993) *Men and Women of the Corporation* elucidates the role of power and how the distribution of power affects the careers and self-image of all people within an organization.

Important administrative analyses of prisons were conducted by Ohlin (1960), Jacobs (1977) and DiIulio (1987). Ohlin conducted an analysis of correctional administration interest groups and dissected the ways in which these groups conflict and how correctional administrations manage these conflicts. Jacob's landmark study demonstrated the influence of administrative leadership over the lives and functioning of a prison, as well as the influence of broader social movements. DiIulio illustrated how particular formal regimes of control and administration affect the overall climate of a prison and the quality of life of the inmates therein. These works point to the importance of understanding the administrative regimes of an institution generally and to the prison in particular. Yet none explore the ways that the group interests of the administration and the inmates – much less other groups in the prison – are shaped by organizational structure and formal procedures, nor do they detail how these interests may conflict and lead to specific behavioral outcomes.

As a result of these organizational studies of corporations and administrative studies of prisons, we know that institutional orders in a prison are subject to the same forces as those of any other formal organization. Individuals can come to have enormous influence over the character and running of a facility, broader social forces can force changes in policies or missions, and informal structures and procedures can develop to bridge the gap between daily functioning, individual and group goals, and broader organizational goals.

As noted above, the administrative order is not the only order in the prison. Each class of people described in Chapter 1 has group interests tied to their organizational

roles or their position in the prison ecology. These goals lead groups to act in ways to achieve those goals or to make justifications for actions and states as cohering with those goals and interests. Sometimes these interests, such as the minimization of inmate physical conflict, are shared across groups. Sometimes, however, the interests can conflict. COs are interested in their functions of custody and control, toward the organizational goal of security. Programming personnel are interested in promoting behavior that will help inmates reintegrate into society and refrain from recidivating after release. Programming personnel, then, are interested in developing positive rewards for behavior, encouraging decision making, and promoting healthy relationships with family and friends. None of these goals are in the interests of security staff, who seek to minimize the autonomy of inmates as a method of limiting security breaches²³.

This chapter is interested specifically in the orders of the administration, the officer personnel, and the inmates. The primary agents who enact the administrative order include the administrative personnel, but the daily agents of control are the officers. As such, they often come to have the face of the administrative regime, though they are not in fact or practice a part of the administrative order. What is presented here is an outline of the characteristics of the administrative, officer, and inmate order, their interests, and the ways in which those interests are in conflict or can be reconciled.

²³ What is described here are the *formal* interests of these groups. While programming is interested in promoting skills development and positive decision making toward the goal of successful reentry into society, certainly programming staff also have their own self-interests as well. Programming personnel want recognition, greater organizational power, stability in employment, etc.

Similar analyses could – perhaps should – be carried out with the other orders of the institution – officer, programming, civilian, and volunteer.

The Administrative Order

The formal order is that of the prison administration. It lays out a particular system of appearance and behavior, implicit in its meaning, requiring docility, asexuality, and infantilism on the part of inmates. These expectations are regularly in conflict with the identities of the men expected to adhere to them. Nevertheless, short of release or a radical reconstruction of incarceration in the US, these men must fundamentally conform to prison administrative order. Regardless of stubborn rebellion, all incarcerated people will wear a particular uniform, use a particular number as their identity, walk to and from particular spaces and particular times for all activities including those for hygiene and bodily care, and limit their contact with the outside world. Yet it must be pointed out that, even to those who enact prison administrative order, the meanings implicit in the policies and procedures are not always clear.

The administration is tasked with “promoting public safety by managing offenders” (“Annual Report” 2011, 5). This is done by separating and isolating inmates from broader society (custody), preventing inmates from leaving prison or having unauthorized access to the public (control), and, according to the mission of the MADOC, “preparation for successful reentry into the community,” which is done through various types of programs (programming) (5).

Procedurally, inmates are expected to identify with their assigned number, wear only officially authorized clothing that is devoid of branding and is of specific colors (blue or white), limit their location and movement to specific places and times, respond unquestioningly to officer questions and commands, and refrain from any sexual contact with any one, regardless of consent. Each of these aspects of the expression of administrative order can be tied to the interests of the prison and its character as a bureaucracy.

State governments and the public expect prisons to maintain accurate, consistent records of inmates under their purview. These records must follow an inmate throughout his or her correctional career, and they must comprise all contact (legal, administrative, programmatic, etc) with the inmate. As such, identification numbers are used to readily recognize and distinguish inmates. Administrative files are maintained of all correspondence between the inmate and the administration, of disciplinary infractions, and of programming participation.

Correctional institutions are expected to know where every single inmate is at every single moment of the day as a measure of security. Further, inmates are confined to specific areas of the carceral space for security, to limit access to means of escape or weapons or contraband. Specific dress allows any observer to readily distinguish classes of people in the prison facility. Without having to know a particular person's name or position in the camp, dress immediately allows a person to know whether an individual is minimally authorized to be in a location. Dress can also be tied to security

and containment. Any inmate wishing to escape from prison must solve the problem of their dress appearance in society.

Limiting movement and controlling interaction and gestures are always formally tied to security and control. For example, a riot nearly broke out in Shirley Medium in 1995, and so fences were erected to limit the free movement of inmates throughout the space. Inmates are released for meal times by block, each separately to minimize open contact among the inmates and opportunities for misconduct. While prisoners are allowed access to weight lifting equipment, recreation spaces, and athletic programming, they are expected to be completely physically and psychologically docile with respect to officer and administrative authority.

Although sexual activities are enacted regularly in prison, this is strictly forbidden by administrations in every state. There is no official explanation for the ban in Massachusetts, but presumably this is for the all-encompassing mission of security. A deputy sheriff in San Francisco argues that “even consensual sexual activity among inmates can lead to very real problems” like disharmony among inmates, which is considered a security risk (Lavender 2015).

The pervasiveness of the administrative order on inmate life cannot be overstressed. An outcome of constant exposure to the order includes ingrained control, a situation in which a person has automatic, unconscious responses to any number of stimuli. As a part of Chapter 3, I detail various examples of people who have been released from prison, sometimes for several years, and still have behaviors that they self-identify as originating from their time imprisoned. A few examples include waking

up at the same time that was required in prison, maintaining a tidy living quarter, preparing and eating the same foods, and enacting specific body movements (standing at attention, falling to the ground with hands up) when hearing sirens or horns.

The Inmate Order

The inmate order, like other orders in the prison, has distinctive characteristics. It is nearly a powerless group in the prison. As such, its major characteristics develop around its inability to act autonomously or form coalitions to formally develop, express, and implement group interests²⁴. As individuals and a group, inmates' lives are at the complete mercy of the state apparatuses of constraint and control. What type of clothing is worn, what food is consumed, how often showers are taken, how often recreation outside is had — all of this is not under the purview of the inmate's discretion except within the bounds of what the prison allows.

The levers of formal power for the inmates are few. At Shirley, there are two main ways that inmates exercise formal influence over their lives with respect to the administrative order. The first is through the formal grievance process. Incarcerated people have a right to express legal or procedural complaints against the administration through a formalized process known as grievance. The grievance officer is a member of the correction officer class, and, as you can imagine, most inmates believe that filing a complaint or reporting injury is futile. When I asked whether Hector, a man nearing the end of his five-to-six year sentence for drug possession, would file a grievance for what

²⁴ Certainly some prison systems, notably the California state system, do have structures in place that allow inmates some political voice. However, by far the incarcerated experience is one of formal powerlessness against state apparatuses of control and constraint.

I thought to be a legitimate complaint he said no. "I don't wanna file nothing 'cause it's not gonna do nothing," he said.

Max echoed this belief. When I met him he was at the beginning of his twenty-year mandatory sentence for breaking and entering as a habitual offender. He said that had filed a grievance in the past, but that "they cover up for one another," and "throw it [the grievance] under the rug." He claimed that you really had to know what you are doing in order to successfully claim a grievance. Peter felt similarly. He made the observation that COs controlling the disciplinary report review and the grievance process was setting up inmates to have limited success in these systems. "It's built for us to lose," he said. Nevertheless, inmates do file formal grievances.

Inmates use the grievance process for two purposes, formal and informal: redress and control. The formal reason, is to redress a property claim or an injury, or a violation of official protocol. Fabian, the man mentioned earlier serving six years for a weapons violation, filed a grievance against his block officer because during shakedowns (cell inspections for contraband) the officer was throwing away Wall Street Journals that Fabian had paid for.

Fabian: I had a problem with them throwing my stuff away that I bought. ... A couple of times. I was getting the Wall Street, he was throwing them away. In my shakedowns.

EE: And you paid for those?

F: Yeah I paid for those. ... I went through the grievance process and stuff but I never got reimbursed or nothing like that. They don't really care.

He was not compensated for the discarded materials, but the officer was warned to pay heed to what materials were legitimate and rightful property of Fabian's.

A second reason was given to me by Lemar, a non-citizen in his late thirties serving his fifteenth year of a twenty-two year sentence for home invasion. His use of the grievance system was not tied to actual recompense for injury or property infringement.

I've learned how to deal with them [correction officers]. There's some of them, they go out of their way to mess with you. Sometimes you push back. When they do something out of line, you write them up.

Lemar is using the formal procedure of grievance to "write up" officers when he feels they are "messaging" with him or are "out of line." He also told me that this was done "mostly on principle." In his words, "I don't like it – two men should be able to work things out."

Certainly inmates are aware of the formal rules and procedures that they and officers must follow, and they are well aware that officers will often bend the rules for the sake of smooth operations. But Lemar also knows that he can use the very formalism of the prison administration against its agents as a method of limited control over administrative agents.

Although he used the grievance system as it was intended, to make claims against COs for violating protocol or inmate rights, Fabian, like Lemar, also used the grievance system as a form of resistance against the COs. He told me that when he feels the COs are giving him too much pressure then he will pressure them back a little bit. "If I have a problem I have no problem using my pen." He specifically said it was a [form of] retaliation because "nothing's gonna happen."

The second use of the grievance process, an informal form of social resistance, echoes Scott's (1985) description of the way disenfranchised people (in particular, peasants) around the world create resistance to hegemonic power. Prisoners have similar positions of disempowerment, and one can argue that they use similar tactics, such as foot-dragging, false compliance, and "discourses of dignity" as ways of resisting administrative control without formally organizing as a group or challenging the rules.

The second way inmates can exercise influence is through participation in staff access. Staff access was a weekly event for an hour after lunch time in which representatives of the administration including the superintendent of the facility, the deputy superintendent of classification, the director of programming, and other representatives would stand outside the inmate dining hall and make themselves available to inmates for direct discussion of issues. This period was uniformly called "Happy Hour" in Shirley.

The informal name belies the intended effect on inmates and general facility climate. Regular contact with high-level administrators allows inmates to discuss personal cases with people who had control to make change if warranted. Many inmates used the opportunity to make personal appeals, and during classification meetings that I attended, I heard specific cases brought up among the program officers, classification administrators, and programming personnel.

For example, one meeting topic included a particular inmate, Peterson, that was notorious for demands for special accommodation or attention in the prison. As a long-

time inmate, he knew the rules and procedures well. His mother was also a strong advocate for him even though his tenure was entering decades. A classification administrator stated during a classification meeting that inmate Peterson had made another complaint at Happy Hour, and several of those in attendance groaned. She smiled as she said that she knew Peterson was a habitual complainer and that many felt the prison was indulgent to him, but it was a request that they had to address at some point, and dealing with it now would limit the amount of complaining from him later.

Similar to the grievance process described above, inmates also use this formal mechanism as an informal method of resistance against COs. Cliff, a man nearing the end of his four-to-five year sentence for fraud, stated that he used Happy Hour as a mechanism for redress before filing an official grievance. His doing so indicates that informal pressure on COs to clear up an issue is preferred over the officially documented process of grievances. Similarly Frederick, a man in his late-forties serving a second-degree life sentence, noted to me that COs don not like Happy Hour because it can mean limitations to their ability “to impose their will on us.”

Like the grievance process, not all inmates have a positive sentiment regarding Happy Hour. During our second interview Tony G. and I were talking about his interactions with the administration. He described an incident in which he could have filed a grievance but did not, instead writing a letter to the Superintendent. When I mentioned Happy Hour, he said, “It’s a line of lies.” For him, Happy Hour was about placating inmates with words rather than action.

The social world of inmates is shaped by the formal rules of the prison and by the deprivations and limitations of incarceration²⁵. But informal rules are also a major influence on the lives of inmates. Respect and the twin commodities of privacy and information play critical roles inside. Later, in Chapter 3, I will discuss physical privacy, but here I am addressing only the lack of and desire for informational privacy.

Given the lack of autonomy and heterosexual outlets – hallmarks of hegemonic masculine expression (Connell 1995) – it is unsurprising that respect has a determinate role in the social world of inmates. Many physical altercations that occur in prison, especially in maximum-security units, are a result of “disrespect.” Many informal rules of the prison are organized around showing respect or deference to others when in their presence (Colwell 2007). Melvin, a man in his forties serving a drug sentence, told me, “The most important word in the whole dictionary of jail – respect. You want it, you got to give it.”

The social world of the inmates is also influenced by the power of information and the desire for privacy. A person’s conviction or co-defendants can make them an outcast, and so many people guard their personal history. Sexual offenders, in particular, can be beaten and ostracized, and so they are particularly interested in protecting their privacy and keeping their “papers” (conviction and sentencing documentation) hidden. For example, of the forty-six inmates that I interviewed, only two lied to me about their convictions and their sentence lengths, and they were both

²⁵ Skarbek (2014) argues that the deprivation/importation explanatory paradigm that permeates research in prison research is misguided. He argues that norms are emergent rather than fixed, and that they arise to solve problems (are a means to an end) rather than primarily symbolic or fixed. Thus, he uses an economic and governance model to explain inmate behavior.

sex offenders – one convicted of aggravated rape and the other of indecent assault and battery on a person under the age of sixteen. Both had claimed violent, non-sex related crimes that carry long sentences, and both were so convincing when they told me that I had to triple check the administrative files when reviewing their accounts. I will also note that I interviewed one other sex offender, and he was upfront about his conviction, though he denied committing the crime.

Information is at a premium inside and lies and gossip are rampant, and so many inmates avoid talking to unknown people inside. Nicholas, in his sixth year of a ten-year-minimum sentence for a weapons violation and drug dealing gave me his insights into information in prison:

EE: ... But what if you're asked a direct question?

Nicholas: Right. I know what you mean. But like, all right, you might have witnessed something, been there from the beginning, right? You might have known something, or somebody might have told you something. You might have witnessed something and been there from the beginning. You know exactly what this person is asking you. But at the same time, you're like, 'Man, listen, I don't know.' You know what I'm saying? 'Ask him.' That's what you gotta do. Because the main thing here is, like, besides some of the people – compared to the prison population and the people you *actually* know personally, it's little to none. So, you don't know these people! You don't know this person. You don't know why he's asking this question. I mean – [pssst]. So why you gonna tell him? He might be setting you up for anything. You *are* here with criminals! [Laughs hard.] So, it could be anything that's happening, you know what I'm saying? ... I mean, people ain't here for being good. I ain't here for being good. Keep it all the way real. Everybody's here for doing something bad. So you can't just open up to everybody and open yourself up to everybody, tell everybody everything.

This extended quote highlights the nature of information sharing inside prison. Most importantly, sharing information could get you “set up,” meaning implicated in a false situation in which you are punished by the COs or other inmates. Nicholas is just as

concerned, however, with the fact that sharing information with people in prison is a form of “opening up,” of revealing yourself to people who you have very little connection to, about whom you know very little.

Nicholas specifically cited being “set up” as a danger of information sharing. There are other dangers, as well. Casiano, a man in his twenties nearly eligible for parole on his five-to-seven-year sentence for robbery, reported that “one guy looked at his friend’s info and started writing to his [friend’s] girlfriend.” This seemed not to be an isolated incident, as another inmate reported that you have to be careful who you invite to visits, as guys might try to start talking to your girlfriend on the side.

Information is at a premium in prison, where it is closely guarded, yet Donovan, the self-professed prison vigilante, said that information was easy to get if you had a good relationship with COs.

EE: I don’t know how it gets done, but I find that information can travel pretty quickly.

Donovan: It’s not hard. There’s a cop everywhere that doesn’t like a rat or doesn’t like a rapist or doesn’t cover their sheet up and go to the bathroom. Everybody on the block can read it. It’s always been that way. It was actually easier for us before they had the computers because there were inmate clerks in records and books and everywhere else.

A CO never told me that this happened, but information about inmates did travel fast. That said, inmates also readily complained about gossipers and people who spread lies. Inmates were highly suspicious of each other generally, and the term “manipulator” was used often by inmates and COs alike to describe some inmates.

Because there is virtually no physical privacy in prison, and because personal information sharing is considered dangerous, many incarcerated people retreat into

emotional privacy, internalizing or ignoring emotional events and avoiding others as a way to deal with the stresses of the prison environment (Toch 1992). Xavier, a man in his late twenties serving five years for drug trafficking described how he viewed himself in prison to me early in our interview.

Like I said, I'm quiet and reflective. I'm a loner, too. In certain situations I'm a loner. I'm the type of person, I like to sneak off by myself. Like I said, I'm an undercover nerd. So, a lot of my time spent reading.

Later in the interview when I asked how he dealt with stress he said, "Just dig deep in my studies." Xavier uses isolation and reading as a way to deal with the stress of the prison and create distance. If you remember from before, Fabian used his routine to "not feel it," to not feel the stresses of prison and to develop as sort of numbness to the environment.

The primary interests of the incarcerated class involve limiting disruptions to daily routine, getting or maintaining access to the outside, limiting contact with the officer class and having means to resist their power, dealing with a lack of physical privacy and control over information, and shortening a sentence whenever possible. The human interests of imprisoned people are the same as any person in the free world--autonomy, freedom, recognition, independence, and respect²⁶.

What I have outlined above are some of the interests of each of the major orders in prison: administrative, security, and inmate. The following section presents some of

²⁶ Toch (1992) hypothesizes that prison environments prompt eight particular concerns in inmates: privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, social stimulation, and freedom. I draw my list up based on my interactions with inmates, the interviews I conducted, and their explanations for their behavior and their descriptions of their concerns.

the ways in which the various orders in the prison can conflict or be reconciled, and how this can shape behavior and identity inside the prison.

Conflict or Reconciliation

Administrations want the smooth running of their prison with minimal physical injuries to their employees or inmates. While inmates rarely care about the officers or other employees of the facility, they, too are interested in their own physical safety and health, and they, too, want to have a routine that is predictable and reliable. In this case, we can see where interests of these two orders align.

Reconciliation: Routine and Safety

Inmates and officers and administration are generally reconciled in their interest for routine. Chapter 1 provided a typical daily routine for inmates, and it highlighted the importance of routine as a way to manage prison life. I also demonstrated a distinction between routine and monotony.

Officers are also interested in routine. During my observation period in the living quarters of inmates, an officer came into the unit. Officer Smith, one of the block officers on duty introduced me to him and said, “He (Johnson) is very knowledgeable.” Johnson replied, “Experienced, yes, knowledgeable, no.” When I asked Johnson what makes a good day and what makes a bad day, he said it depends on who you talk to—some guys would say a quiet day. Some guys who maybe are newer, younger, less

experienced, would say a day when there was an altercation and they could take down a guy. He made it clear that more experienced officers preferred quiet and routine.

Another area in which the interests of the administration, officers, and inmates all align is a desire for safety. All people are concerned about their physical safety, and officers and inmates are directly confronted with threats to their person on a regular basis. Particularly in high violence environments, such as maximum-security facilities, serious harm can and does come to inmates and officers on a regular basis.

During my time at Shirley Medium, there was a major disturbance at the maximum-security facility across the parking lot, Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center (SBCC) (named after a corrections officer and an industries instructor who had themselves lost their lives in service). Six officers were sent to the hospital as a result of a melee that started reportedly as a result of an officer shakedown. Jaimie, mentioned in Chapter 1 when talking about Shirley's softness compared with SBCC's, was stabbed during his time there. At Shirley there were two inmate-on-inmate disturbances one after another in a single morning during my first week of field research.

Physical harm is a very real threat for officers and inmates alike, and their interests in safety are aligned. While officers and inmates are concerned with safety of their own person, administration also has an interest in their safety. Administrators are interested in reducing physical altercations and promoting safety for any number of reasons including reducing turnover in the officer class, improving officer job satisfaction, improving measurable outcomes for safety of the facility, all to say nothing of the purely moral reason of reducing harm to people in the care of the prison.

Conflict: Freedom, Independence/Adulthood, Programming, Outside Contact, Sexuality

While there are interests that are shared across institutional orders which contribute to reconciliation by the inmates of administrative and officer power, the majority of interests across the inmate/non-inmate orders are in conflict. Incarcerated people have interests that are common to all individuals – freedom and being treated as an autonomous person/adult. Prisoners also have interests that develop as a result of their particular situation – an interest in programming, having contact with the outside, and expressing sexuality. These interests are in direct conflict with the administrative and security regimes of prisons, and as such are the cause of considerable unhappiness for inmates and non-inmates alike.

That inmates are interested in freedom is unsurprising. Carceral punishment in the United States is a function of deprivation of freedom, separation from community, and time²⁷. Americans especially, have powerful sensibilities for freedom to move about their lives without restrictions, to “come and go as I please,” so many had said. When I asked inmates, “What are some of the things you miss now that you’re inside?”, the number one response was freedom. Over forty-five percent of respondents (16/35)²⁸ directly responded with the word “freedom” or by describing the ability to come and go or travel at will. Because this is such a fundamental interest and its deprivation is

²⁷ Community punishment, probation and parole, for example, are functions of deprivation of freedom and time, but not of separation from community.

²⁸ All of the statistics involving counting responses are conservative. Thirty-three of the interviews forty-six initial interviews were recorded and five of the eight follow-up interviews were recorded. When counting non-interview responses I could only work from marginalia on the interview questionnaire. Only clear examples of the topic were counted for which I had a recording or a direct note on the questionnaire. For example, with respect to, “What do you miss?” and sexuality/intimacy, I only counted positively instances in which the inmates specifically addressed “intimacy,” “being with a woman,” “relationship,” “sex,” or provided an extended example as given in the text.

inherent in American prisons, no more time will be spent on it here. It should be noted, however, that even inmates who have an “internal” orientation as described below have an interest in freedom from prison.

A related but separate interest inmates have is autonomy. By autonomy I mean the ability to make decisions for themselves and act with sovereignty. This is interpreted by most inside prison as being treated like an adult. Many inmates reported that they did not like the way COs treated them, and they often compared it to being treated as a child. While only two people specifically stated “not being told what to do” in response to the question, “What do you miss now that you’re inside?”, several inmates expressed frustration at being treated as a child or as less than an autonomous adult at Shirley.

Almost two weeks into my field research I was in a living unit at Shirley talking to three inmates, Big, Casiano, and an inmate who wishes to remain anonymous. At one point Payne mentioned that he’s been trying to get out of Shirley Medium go any where even to “Shirley Max” (what some inmates call SBCC, because it shares land with Shirley). I expressed surprise that w was willing to go to the max rather than stay at Shirley Medium. He said it was better, and the anonymous inmate agreed. He said that “up there” both COs and inmates treat each other with more respect than at Shirley. The anonymous inmate said that he’s “a grown man” and he should be talked to as such. Big agreed with him.

Just two days earlier I had interviewed Alex who had mentioned the very same thing. He described to me how he was not allowed to ask COs questions like how old they were and the negative response he would receive.

Talking to these COs – is female COs in here that you could talk to, but as a man, it messes with your mental when they tell you like you're a children. ... You feel like – you feel like a child. Like if you're really being controlled.

For Alex, and for many others, he particularly disliked the feeling of being treated like a child, especially “as a man,” he says.

I asked J. Devine, a man nearing the parole eligibility date of his ten-to-twelve year sentence for attempted murder, what got him frustrated, and he responded in similar language as Alex: “I don't like it when another man tells me what to do.” This result of this kind of interaction can be profound. Casiano told me, “Having people younger than you telling you what to do” changes the way you see yourself.

Bennie, a man serving a life without parole sentence who you'll read more about below, responded to my question about frustrations in prison this way:

Most of all, officers. Some of them abuse their authority and can appear belittling.

For inmates, belittling, infantilizing, or autonomy-depriving treatment by COs and the system were a very real cause for frustration and unhappiness. Frederick was quite clear on this: “We're supposed to be mature, grown men. I don't need to be told what to do.”

For Alex, J. Devine, and Frederick, they experienced a deprivation of adulthood, through language or tone of voice or by being told what to do. And for all of these men, this deprivation of adulthood had particularly gendered overtones, as they felt it

affected them as men. The link between the ability to act autonomously and manhood or masculinity was drawn particularly clearly by Dominic, who had served over seven years of his eighteen-to-twenty year sentence at the time of our interview:

Just between me and you: If I see a female in here and I can't walk up to her and talk to her like I want to, it's like a piece of me as a man is being taken away. It hurts me, really stresses me out. It really bothers me. ... A part of you is taken away from you. And it hurts the spirit.

Dominic clearly suffers because of his inability to express his masculinity and sexuality, to the point that he feels a part of himself has been removed.

Bennie also expressed an interest in having heterosexual social interactions with women that were not particularly intercourse related:

EE: What do you miss now that you're inside?

Bennie: This. Talking to a female. ... When there's no female around, we look around for feminine gestures. I think one of the best things to happen was having female cops.

While no doubt Dominic and Bennie would prefer to have heterosexual sex, even the presence of women, the ability to interact with them as men (not simply as genderless and sexless people), and the "gestures" of femininity are missed.

Sexuality and gender expression is a site of conflict in prison. The body of literature is vast on the subject of sex in prison, and I will only touch on the issue here to note the conflict. As is indicated by the quotes above, autonomy is closely tied to manhood, which is threatened in prison. All sexual expression and activity is forbidden in prison. That sex and sexuality is important to inmates is evidence by the responses to the question "What do you miss?" Over twenty-eight percent (10/35) of interviewees who were asked this question specifically mentioned women, intimacy, relationships, or

sex. This is remarkable particularly given that the men generally were reluctant to discuss sex or sexuality with me.

While certainly no one in administration or security claims that they are infantilizing inmates, it is occurring. Inmates' perceptions of their treatment are real. They are told when to get up, when to go to bed, when to shower, and when to eat, just as children are. They cannot choose what to wear, where to go, or what to eat, except within very limited constraints. Inmates must also ask permission for nearly everything they do, whether it is to check on their account balance or visit with a family member. All of this treatment is in keeping with treating adults as one would treat a child or the mentally limited²⁹.

It is definitely within the security personnel interests to have inmates under such control. Limiting choices and autonomy makes for a more predictable and controlled environment. Security, however, do not establish the rules of the facility directly. It is set in collaboration with the administration, which also has an interest in reducing the unpredictability of inmates. It also has an interest in limiting the discretion of corrections officers in order to produce accurate records and assure that protocols are adhered to, so as to reduce liability. A latent interest of both administration and security is a "docile" inmate population that has limited resistance to rules and procedures. An attitude of infantilization is a means to that end.

Inmates also have a strong interest in programming. There are structural incentives for this interest: participation in many programs counts toward "good

²⁹ Salari (2006) and Salari and Rich (2001) have researched the infantilization of the elderly in day care centers, finding that adverse behavior is associated with infantilizing treatment by care givers.

behavior” reductions in indeterminate sentences³⁰, and all inmates are interested in reducing their sentence lengths.

Many inmates also want to engage in programming and employment for other reasons. Programs help pass the time and make it easier to manage the monotony of prison life. Programs also allow an inmate to engage with non-security personnel. Programs are almost all uniformly run by civilian employees of the state, state-contracted civilian employees, or volunteers. Participating in a program can allow an inmate to have some sort of contact with the outside through the people who are running the program.

This contact with the outside can be as simple as a conversation with a person who is not employed as a security or administrative agent with the prison. This kind of contact is symbolic in its nature, in which the inmate has an exchange that finds meaning in that the person is not an agent of the administration or security orders.

Contact with the outside through programming can also be literal. It can be through writing or art that is sent to outside parties or is published. Or, as in one program at Shirley, it can be through talking with high school students about the pitfalls of crime (a “scared straight” program). It can also be through illegal contact, such as the exchange of contraband goods and services or intimate relations.

³⁰ Indeterminate sentences are sentences which have a range of length (a minimum and a maximum), for example three to five years. An inmate becomes eligible for parole at their minimum date, but they may have “good time” awarded that makes them eligible for parole even earlier. Determinate sentences (“flat”) are sentences that have only a single designated length, say ten years. Mandatory sentences (“mando”) are products of truth-in-sentencing laws, and they mean that a person must serve the full sentence minimum and are not eligible for good time off the mandatory minimum.

While the agents of the programming regime in prisons clearly have an interest offering rehabilitative and educational programs, there never seems to be enough programming available to inmates. While there is evidence that the “rehabilitative ideal,” as expressed through various measures of programming availability in prisons, has not declined as much as common belief suggests (Phelps 2011), there is no denying that there is far greater demand for programs and employment than is available.

Nicholas, who has served six years of his ten-to-thirteen year sentence, has a sophisticated understanding of the structural constraints on programming that Don described earlier in the introduction:

Really, the program thing here – this is what the administration say the program – the entry into programs, this is what it goes by. It goes by, um, a thing that they call the COMPAS³¹. And it’s based on – it’s like a survey. It’s based on what you say in the survey along with the time you have left on your sentence. So now, the survey part of it is, ok, whatever you say on the survey, you’re going to be kind of like, scored high, low – high, medium, or low. As far as offender. High-risk offender, medium, low – medium risk offender, or low risk offender. Meaning, if you place high you’re a high risk to offend again. If you place medium, you’re a medium risk to offend again, you know low is you’re low risk to offend again. So, that – being a high-risk offender, that COMPAS thing in the programs basically cater to you. If you’re a high-risk offender, you’re accepted into almost everything. If you’re a low-risk offender, you have little to none. You know what I’m saying. With that, they put along the time that you have left. So, me, in my situation, I place as a low-risk offender on the COMPAS, and I have – since I been in this camp right now, I have about four years left to my PE [parole eligibility] date. So now, I have too much time to be in any program, and I have limited programs I can even apply for because I’m a low-risk offender.

³¹ This is a survey tool called the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (Northpointe 2010) developed by a criminal justice research and consultancy firm. According to Northpointe’s website, “COMPAS Core for Adult Offenders is designed for risk and need decision support for community-based offenders and inmates entering prison” (Northpointe, n.d.)

This is an extended quote, but it highlights both that at least some inmates understand the constraints on programming resources and how they can limit inmate access to programs and it highlights the particular nature of how programming resources get allocated.

The administration and security have some interest in providing such programs to inmates. As described earlier, Don, the head of the CPOs during my tenure at Shirley, expressed dismay that more programming was not available to inmates. Similarly, during my tier observations Officers Johnson, Jackson, and Smith all lamented the decline of rec programs at Shirley.

There are administrative and security disincentives, however, for programming. As noted in Chapter 1, both the administration and security personnel are highly suspicious of programming personnel. These are people who do not have the same occupational commitments to security as the administration and corrections officers. Programming personnel are considered a security risk because they move between the inside and outside but are not members of the security staff. Even though relationships occur between inmates and officers, civilians are perceived to be at greater risk for such inappropriate relations. Orientation for volunteers and programming personnel always emphasizes the ability of inmates to con people into bringing in contraband goods or establish inappropriate relationships. Programming personnel are considered overly sympathetic by their nature to inmate conditions and therefore susceptible to unacceptable relationships or exchanges.

The nature of the conflict with programming is directly related to the fourth major conflict, contact with the outside. This interest, as with freedom, is inherent in carceral punishment. The very nature of incarceration is to separate the convicted from society. As such, there is a direct conflict of interest between the administration, who want to preserve this separation, and inmates, who want to maintain contact with the outside. Gordo, my very first inmate interview, was very perceptive of this conflict of interest. "So," he said, "the way prison is designed, it's designed to make sure that I have very limited access to the outside world."

It is not surprising that administrations are concerned with limiting contact with the outside. Not only is this part of the nature of carceral punishment, there is a strong security element, particularly for violent inmates. The first major disturbance during my research time was widely reported to me by inmates as the result of "street" problems (as described below by Alex), meaning that some issues from a neighborhood spilled in the prison.

Cell phones are an increasing problem in prisons (T. W. Burke and Owen 2010; National Telecommunications and Information Admin... 2010), and they indicate both that prisons are porous and have limited ability to control contraband from entering the prison and that incarcerated people want to maintain contact with the outside in ways that are not directly observed by the prison administration. Shirley is not immune to the growing cell phone presence in prisons. During my very first sit-in during an administrative climate meeting, it was reported by security staff that a cell phone charger had been found, but not the cell phone.

As described in the introduction, administrations and security personnel perceive sexual expression, even consensual sexual relations, to be a security threat. However, the ban on sexuality extends far beyond acts. The one of the regulations at Shirley (and prisons all over the country) states, “Inmates may not display any nude, semi nude, or sexually suggestive pictures of any kind are allowed to be displayed [sic].” Pornography is forbidden, as is any sort of drawing or pictures of even “semi-nude” or “suggestive” pictures. The regulations do not explain this ban.

It is clear that there are many facets of interest conflict among the administrative and inmate orders. Given that prisons are a locus of punishment, it is unsurprising that conflicts of interest are inherent in the system. However, latent conflicts, such as an infantilization of inmates, also exist and are not inherent in carceral punishment itself. Alternative systems of incarceration can be imagined that do not rely on the stripping of complete autonomy of inmates, and certainly even in the U. S. at minimum-security facilities infantilization is less.

Inmate Perceptions of the Prison System

Inmates are aware of the administrative order, although they may not call it such. It is understood by its overarching and impersonal nature. While inmates may interact with individual representatives of the administration, such as the superintendent during appointed Staff Access times periods, they know that these are individuals holding a position. The superintendent may change next year or next month. They are also aware that the officers, while having individual effects on their daily life, are part of a larger system, one which controls them both.

These facts were made clear to me throughout my talks with inmates. They would often use the word “they” to talk about the administrative order. For example, Wayne, a tattooist you will meet in Chapter 4, used this language when he was telling me about how the prison was run. “They do what they want, when they want,” he said. Michael, a twenty-five-year-old in for a probation violation, used similar language, saying, “They lock down all day long... They don’t feed you enough.” Often talk of the “they” and the nature of how this are run at the prison are generalizations that are referencing the administrative order – its rules and procedures – as well as the generalized population of officers who enact the prison regime.

Another example of this impersonalized perception of the prison administration (and entire system more generally) comes from William.

But they’re not trying to change anything. This is the way I feel about it. They see what the situation is and to them it’s a job. They get their hours a week, and they get the fuck out of here. They don’t really care. That’s just the way I feel about it. If they lose their job, some other motherfucker’s going to come in here. They’re not going to make waves. ... They don’t care. They have job security. Crime is always going to be there. You’re sending me home with the same mentality I came in with.

William uses the impersonal “they” and “them,” and he articulates clearly that the system is impersonal. For him, prison employees are there to collect a paycheck and not to engage with the inmates in a rehabilitative mission.

It should also be noted that there is a strong perception by the imprisoned that the US incarceration system is a money-making affair. Inmates that I spoke with regularly stated that the prison system in the US generally, and the prison at which they were in particularly, was a for-profit venture. My first encounter with this idea was

with Gordo, who was a drug-dealer and a designated “career criminal” by the state of Massachusetts. This meant that he was serving an enhanced sentence for gun possession due to his prior convictions:

This is my perspective---This isn’t about rehabilitation. This is about generating revenue. That’s why they call the criminal justice system criminal business. ... This is job security for a lot of people.

Gordo was not alone in this thinking. Several inmates I interviewed or spoke with informally would make off-hand comments stating that “they” were making money by imprisoning people. Some would note that the officers were making a lot of money by locking up inmates.

In fact, this is relatively true. According the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual wage for correctional officers in 2012 was \$38,970 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014). The range of annual wages is wide, with the bottom 10% at \$27,000 or lower, and the top 10% at \$66,000 or higher. The MADOC reports a base salary of a starting correction officer at \$1686.57 bi-weekly, for an annual wage of \$40,478.

Because of the unionized nature of the job, overtime is compensated well, and this can significantly increase an officer’s income. For example, Officer O’Brien told me that his goal was to break the six-figure mark in income, and he was getting close to it with overtime pay. Similar figures were reported recently in Pennsylvania, where the base officer salary is \$51,000 but the highest paid employee, an officer, made \$139,571 with overtime.

However, this is at the individual level of employment, and corrections officers’ salaries vary widely across the country. Inmates generally believe that the incarceration

system in the United States is a systematic money-making affair. For example, Nicholas believed that one of the reasons programming was so difficult to get into was that it was a scam.

But programming and rehabilitation, that's a money making scam. That's all to get funding. That's all to get funding for what they want. They don't really put it into programs and this, and that, and the third. They always talk this program, program, rehabilitation. I've been to other jails where they don't even have this – what do they call them? The contractors that come in to even facilitate the programs. They don't even have people to facilitate the programs. But that's the big argument every year. 'We need money, we need money.' You got money! Where's the people at? You know what I'm saying? So it's a big money scam to me.

Nicholas is clearly frustrated at the lack of programming, and he has translated this lack as a systematic “money scam.”

Inmate Orientation: Convict or Community

In addition to their response to the administrative order (conflict or reconciliation), inmates can also be defined by where their locus of psychological, behavioral, and social orientation is. The prison, as we know, is a society unto itself. It has its own ecology, its own regulations, its own social and moral order. But we also know that the prison, as an institution, and the people within it as individuals, is a part of society. It is shaped and influenced by its function in broader culture and the state, and the vast majority of people inside the prison will leave it – whether at the end of their shift or at the end of their sentence.

The nature of incarceration as punishment relies on separation and deprivation. The separation of the individual from society is, fundamentally, the deprivation of

community for an individual, the deprivation of association with family and friends, and the deprivation of citizenship³². Other deprivations have been charted, particularly by Sykes ([1958] 2007) and Goffman (1961).

An inmate can respond to this separation fundamentally in two ways: by orienting his life to the society created within the prison, or by attempting to remain psychologically, if not manifestly, in connection with society outside the prison. I argue that while a person may oscillate between these two orientations during his or her incarceration, their goals and actions correlate to only one orientation in a given period.

Internal Orientation and Networks

Inmates can identify primarily with either of these two societies. Many inmates, especially those serving long sentences, have an “inside” orientation, what I have rhetorically labeled “convict.” For these people, daily existence is structured around the people, politics, and social life of the prison. Contact with the outside, to friends and family, is kept to a minimum. Thoughts of life beyond the prison walls are actively minimized, and the cognitive positioning is to the social world immediately surrounding the inmate.

Eddie is a thirty-seven-year-old man in his sixth year of a twelve-to-fifteen year sentence for drug trafficking, a first state incarceration. When I asked him how he managed his time in the prison, he told me about the typical structure: wake up, do his

³² Prisoners in the United States do not lose their formal citizenship: they remain members of the state. However, basic rights of citizenship – the right to vote, to participate in juries, and to have free movement about the country – are stripped from individuals, often even long after they have served their sentence (Manza and Uggen 2006; Alexander 2010). In a cultural sense, inmates lose citizenship in that they are physically removed from participating in the civic and cultural life of their communities.

institutional job, go to school, cook, workout in the gym, and read. He added, "I always try to keep my mind busy. ... I stay away from outside life." Later in the interview, he described being in prison this way, "It's like you pause the radio when you come inside and then you hit play when you get out."

For Eddie, incarceration means that his "outside" life, his life as a member of broader society, completely stops. Although he has four children and says he misses them, he criticizes other inmates for trying to tell their children what to do.

You see guys on the phone, 'Where you been? Where you going?' You can't do that.

I asked him why, and he said that you can't be in your family's life when you're behind bars.

Eddie also has a good friend in prison. He told me, "I got a friend of mine here, he's like my brother." He explained that they both participated in the drug rehabilitation program together and used to share a cell. Eddie knew his friend by face from the streets, but they did not interact or become close until they both ended up in prison. They talk, spend rec time together, and work out together. His friend, however, is getting deported upon his release.

Eddie is an example of an internal orientation in that he views incarceration as a cessation of his life as it relates to beyond the walls. He also believes that people inside should not try to influence the lives of their family and friends on the outside. He also has found a "brother" inside, with whom he has developed a very close relationship. All this said, Eddie still had significant contact with his family, having had two full visit cards. He also had a visitor banned for attempting to smuggle in a cell phone and phone

card. Thus, while Eddie has characteristics of an internal psychological orientation, he also clearly attempts to maintain contact with people on the outside.

Another example of an inwardly oriented inmate is Donovan, who is described again below. He is a man in his forties serving his sixteenth year of a twenty-five to thirty-five year sentence, with an additional twenty-year sentence after completing his first sentence. He is an isolationist now, but he used to be a prison vigilante.

EE: How would you describe yourself?

Donovan: Now? Like, currently? An isolationist.

EE: What about before?

D: I was strictly about prison vigilantism back then. I firmly believe that we should all police our own, and the only reason the cops are here's to take counts and keep you from hitting the fence.

Donovan's internal orientation is expressed through his active policing of people's behavior in prison. Donovan's internal orientation is expressed through his active policing of people's behavior in prison. He feels particularly strongly about sexual offenders:

Some things are just unacceptable in prison. Like, fifteen years ago you could walk around this prison half dressed and nobody would go within fifteen feet of you. Now, every third guy is a rapist. That's unacceptable. And if we were to do — and we do. Every now and then somebody gets their teeth knocked loose. But we're the bad guy, not them. Which doesn't make any sense.

Donovan brought up policing inmates against anything that could be perceived as threatening a woman many times. He also made it clear that this behavior of his he had developed while he was inside:

Have I changed? ... I guess the only change was from — from civilized, when I first came in, to prison terrorist for ten, twelve years, back to trying

to civilize myself.

Donovan can also be identified as internally oriented in that his primary connections are to people inside the prison. He explained to me his traditional socialization into the prison which included an older inmate “who decided [he] was going to be his girlfriend fifteen minutes in.” Donovan defeated the inmate in a physical confrontation, and when he was released from the hole there were people that supported him:

EE: And then you kind of hung out with these people.

D: Yeah, that basically becomes your family. All your friends are the only people you trust.

Note the difference here in how Donovan calls these people his family and people he trusts. This is quite different from Nicholas’s perspective given above. He argues that no one in prison can be trusted, and certainly not as close as someone you know from the outside. Donovan’s orientation to the inside is both cognitive in how he perceives relationships as well as behavioral, through his actions as a former vigilante.

We talked quite a bit about his activities, how he associated with people inside, and how he came to be a vigilante and have the strong moral code that he did. He explained that it was a result of the people who socialized him into prison.

When I first come in, the younger guys if they didn’t have a fucked up case—excuse my language—the older guys would take them under their wing. ... So it just becomes a role that you take on, dependent on the people you associate with.

Thus Donovan’s orientation to the prison was something that he learned. It is no doubt also a function of his extremely long sentence (over forty years) and the fact that he has very little family (no mother, a father he has not spoken with in decades) on the outside.

Other inmates gave me insight into how they perceive people who have prison-oriented lives. One example is William, a man you will get to know in greater detail below. During our interview William started talking about his roommate.

... I sit back and I think about [missing out on living]. 'Damn, when I'm done here it's going to be twelve years!' That's a lot of time. But then I look at other dudes, 'cause that's all there is to do, to compare myself to my roommate. Twenty years in prison. Twenty! And he did, like, seventeen straight! I said, this is crazy. And he's just like – this is his life to him. He does these little things. I see this and I'm like, there's a reason I'm in a cell with this guy. 'Cause I got to see, I don't want to be this guy. So to him, this is nothing. When he gets out, to him it's a run. 'Yeah, I was home for a year. That was a good run.' That was a good run, man? What the fuck. All his life he's been in prison, so to him, this is his life.

This extended quote highlights both the internal orientation of William's roommate, and also William's strong aversion to this orientation. William said, "*I know this isn't me. I feel out of place here.*" Despite the significant time that William has spent in prison, he feels strongly averse to an internal orientation. Even the use of the term "roommate" even after over a decade of prison demonstrates William's cognitive orientation to the outside. Inmates uniformly use the term "cellie" or "cellmate" when referring to people they live with, but William still uses a term from the street.

With respect to networks, the most common internal networks in prison are gangs. Prison gangs have been a part of the carceral ecology since the mid-1950s (Orlando-Morningstar 1997), but they did not come into prominence until the 1960s and 1970s. Disturbances can be caused by problems internal to the prison (often gang or money related) or external to the prison. During my first week in the field there were two disturbances in one morning involving inmate-on-inmate force. Alex and I started talking about it:

EE: The two-on-one thing, was that like a gang thing?

Alex: No, I guess it was something from where they live, in their area. Not necessary in jail.

EE: Oh, so it was a beef from inside here.

A: No, from the streets.

EE: No, not from the streets —

A: Nah nah nah. Something happened on the street. I guess they just brung it to him. Like, somebody got killed recently in the news. I guess they was like, all right, y'all two from there, so we're going to jump on you.

While reviewing the transcript it may seem like he was being clear, but I was under the (common) belief that all violence that stemmed from the streets was a direct response to gang activity which was also directly tied to prisoners. Alex made it clear that talking about gangs meant talking about prison gangs, and talking about the street meant talking about networks related to location or (presumably) street gangs. It became clear that prison gangs, which having some affiliation to street gangs, are not synonymous or a direct link to prison gangs.

Gangs can provide a powerful network of contacts and resources inside a prison³³, even for those who are not members of the gang. For people who need like food from canteen, money, or protection, people can affiliate with a gang. Alex explained to me what the term “affiliated” meant.

Alex: ... It's no mafia thing. When you're in jail, you just can't be like, 'All right, I'm a solve this problem for you, then you go do you, I'm a do me, we ain't going to talk.' You got to be with us. You got to be affiliated with us. My problems got to be yours. And all of yours is going to be mine.

³³ Skarbek (2014) provides a case for how gangs provide governance in prisons for collective action problems.

EE: I see. ... I'm not joining a gang, but I'm taking on problems.

A: Like cheerleaders on a football team. Like, they're not playing football, but they're associated with their team.

Thus prison gangs are one internal network that can extend beyond their formal membership to provide resources (and threats) to other inmates. This is an internal network in that one can affiliate with the gang inside the prison, but this affiliation terminates once a person leaves the prison.

Certainly, prisons are by their function and nature inwardly oriented. The very nature of incarceration as punishment is separation. In addition to this, contemporary sentence lengths in the United States make prison-focused social and psychological positioning seemingly inevitable. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (n.d.) reports that in 2009 (the last year data is available) that median state sentence length was forty-two months (three and one-half years, including life sentences of all types) and the average state sentence length was sixty-one months (five years, excluding any life sentences of any type). At Shirley, just twenty-five percent of the total system population was serving five years or less. Fifty-eight percent of the population was serving five or more years, and seventeen percent were serving life (with or without parole).

Finally, there are structural factors that constrain inmates into a prison- rather than community-orientated outlook. As described above, Shirley, like every other correctional institution, has scarce programmatic supply to meet inmate demands. Don, the chief CPO, explained to me that he wished he could place every inmate who wanted programming into an appropriate place. But because of lack of programs, only those inmates who were within two years or less of release were eligible for many programs.

This meant that folks like Lemar, in his fifteenth year of a twenty-two-year sentence, would have to wait potentially half a decade more before engaging in any programs that were by intent orienting him to the streets.

I want to note here that an internal orientation by no means that a person has given up on life beyond the walls. This orientation is about the degree to which a person has limited contact with the outside – whether through active minimization or for structural reasons – and the degree to which a persons maximizes his social, cognitive, and behavioral orientation to the inside. Few people indeed would say that they prefer living inside a prison, but many people have orientated themselves to the prison society.

Outside Orientation and Bridging Networks

And yet there are many inmates who have an “outside” orientation – the community orientation. These inmates acknowledge that they are in prison, and are well aware that the carceral regime is structured to limit as much as possible contact with the outside. Nevertheless, they work hard to over come barriers to maintain contact with friends and family. Perhaps more importantly, their regular attitude is in reference to life beyond the walls of the prison.

The human condition can be vibrant and resilient in the face of much adversity. This is certainly the case of Benny, a man in his sixties serving life without parole. When I had met him he had been incarcerated for thirty-seven years. Despite his many years in prison, Benny was energetic and incredibly enthusiastic.

As you might imagine, his cultural references were dated, yet he constantly talked about life outside the prison and about the dreams and visions he had of his life. He talked about how different things used to be—lifers could once be released to the streets, but the Willie Horton fiasco brought all the lifers behind the walls³⁴. He argued that “They are punishing us for his actions.” He talked to me about how he was trying to get in touch with Charles Ogletree (a Harvard Law School professor), Margaret Brennan (a CNBC news anchor) and Robert Johnson (unclear) about his case. This is a man who is strongly oriented to the outside world, despite considerable barriers to such a perspective.

Glen was another long-term inmate I met. He was seventy-one or seventy-two (he was not sure, but official records had him at 71) and had been convicted of second-degree murder in 1980. Although he had been eligible for parole since 1995, he had been denied every five years his case was presented before the parole board³⁵. Nevertheless, he had a similar outlook as Bennie despite his long-term confinement. His daily routine included working as a porter in the programs building, so I saw him many times in the course of my fieldwork. He would regularly bid me hello, and if I was in the interview room alone with the door open, he would pop his head in and ask me about my day. During our interview (which he asked not to be recorded) he talked vibrantly about his life as a musician before incarceration. He also was still optimistic that he could be released one day, that he would not die in prison.

³⁴ Willie Horton was serving a life sentence without parole in Massachusetts when he was released to the streets on a weekend furlough program. He raped a woman, bound, gagged, and assaulted her fiancé, and stole their vehicle. He was recaptured in Maryland, where he continues to serve his sentences.

³⁵ One of the documented parole decisions—the only one in his administrative file—was from 2002, stated, “Lengthy criminal history. Lacks insight. Minimizes criminal behavior. High risk to re-offend.”

In both of these cases, despite the no-doubt profound pressures to orient to the prison after over three-decades of confinement, both of these men still oriented their personalities outside of the prison. They had not given up on being a part of, or at least aware of, broader society.

We can see another example of an outside orientation through the words of Fabian, mentioned earlier. I asked him to tell me what a good day was for him.

What's a good day? Maybe when my family comes up here. You know. Or, there's a game on and I win. 'Cause I told you I've been gambling. (Laughs.) Just talking to them, being around my family. Reminding me of stuff from the streets. That's a good day.

Here we see that a broadly open-ended question results in him talking about football on television and talking to his family. Most importantly, he reveals that talking to his family constitutes a good day when they invoke an element of his life from before prison. The general requirements for a good day both stem directly from an emotional orientation to life on the streets and an association of himself there.

Perhaps one of the most heartening examples of a community orientation is found in William. He is a Haitian-American in his late thirties serving a relatively short three-year sentence for drug possession. I first interviewed him in January, then had a follow-up interview with him in June of that year. In between the interviews I reviewed his administrative file and discovered he had put in a request to be married. I asked him about it almost immediately.

EE: I go to your file, and you have a request to be married! Did you get married?!

William: Oh yeah!

EE: That is so exciting! Congratulations!

W: You seen all that? Wow---

EE: Well, I saw an email. ... It said, "These three guys are in love."

W: (Laughs.) ... It took a long time. My wife was a little upset. [She] was, "What's taking so long?! I think you're lying to me." ... She thought I had cold feet or something.

William made a manifest connection with life on the outside by marrying his girlfriend while he was still incarcerated, making a significant commitment to a community orientation.

Perhaps the most succinct description of an outside orientation comes from Charlie: "Physically I'm here, mentally there on the streets."

Relationship between the Inside and the Outside

There is a relationship between the prison and the world outside. This relationship occurs at many levels. One level is social-structural. The forces that affect the people inside the prison, keeper and inmate alike, are omnipresent, and are a function of politics and culture. This relationship was describe well by Gordo:

Now, so, when this guy's [a fictional CO] son is old enough to work at that facility and my son is old enough to do time at that facility then this, like, will be a continuum. So, I said, now that I have some sort of understanding — at least I have my own understanding of how the system works and I have a moral obligation to ensure that my son doesn't have to go through what I go through. But I don't hold it against anyone else but myself because I put myself in these positions. The thing about it is, is you can't take it personal. This has been going on before I was born, this is going to go on long after I'm gone.

Gordo understands that the nature of incarceration in the US is systemic, impersonal, and multi-generational, the attributes of structural forces. He also claims that his awareness of the impersonal nature of the relationship between classes of people

(inmates and officers) makes him morally culpable for keeping his son out of the system.

Xavier noted that the relationship between the prison and society happens even at an individual and group level.

It's always going to be a connection to the prisons and the so-called ghetto. That's the main thing. Like I said, what's out there is dictated from here and vice versa. So when you go [to prison]---a lot of people know where I'm from. A majority of people know I'm not from Boston. So, they know. That history's known. They know what I did and how I did it. So, it's kind of a two-way street.

He notes that this relationship occurs through individual and group knowledge and norms, affecting behavior and expectations simultaneously inside and outside the prison, but confined to a particular group: those who are or may be incarcerated from the ghetto.

One of the questions I asked interviewees was whether they new people on the inside from the streets. Fifty-four percent of people asked directly (19/35) responded in the positive (forty-one percent of the total sample), including Gordo:

EE: Did you know any of the people that you're living with, generally speaking, on the outside?

G: Of course. Of course. The lifestyle that I live is pretty much the lifestyle that they live, so I see it's no coincidence that we're all here in prison.

This was evidenced by both Nicholas and Alex, both self-professed well-known drug dealers. They both said that they knew people in prison from the streets, and that even more people "knew of" them. Meeting people inside from the streets can be comforting. Cliff, a tattoo artist described in greater detail in Chapter 4, told me, "A friend of mine from the streets is here. It's nice to know somebody."

Inmates are certainly not the only people who know each other from the streets. Tony G. self-identified as a member of the Five-Percent Nation, told me that one of the block officers at Shirley was from the block he grew up on. Seth, a man serving life without parole, also mentioned that he knew an officer from the streets. This is a phenomenon has been reported at prisons throughout the country (Toobin 2014; Conover 2000).

This question in particular highlighted the close social relationship between the ghetto and the prison. Wacquant (2001, 2009) has spent years outlining this very phenomenon, arguing that in broad functional terms the prison is an extension of a long history of the social control of Blacks and other marginals by the dominant groups of power in the US.

With respect to officers, there is an interesting phenomenon occurring in at least one jail in which the majority of officers are women from the neighborhoods the inmates are from (Toobin 2014). According to Brenda V. Smith, professor at American University,

“Women are often the only ones who can pass the screens for a job in a jail. You have to have a high-school degree. You have to pass a background investigation and have no criminal record. You have to pass a drug test, urinalysis. The men who live around the jail in Baltimore are less likely to pass those tests. Those jobs have to go to women. And the female guards in Baltimore came from the same neighborhoods as the inmates. Many of them knew each other, or knew of each other, in their prior lives.” (quoted in Toobin (2014).

There is no way for me to know the number of corrections officers who know an inmate from the streets, but clearly it is a phenomenon that occurs, though more predominantly in jails.

Creating a Connection with the Outside

Inmates often try to maintain whatever existing connections they have with the outside.

Some incarcerates, like Gordo, are aware that the length of their captivity, seven years or more, requires greater creativity and tenacity in developing and maintaining a connection to the outside:

So, the responsibility of someone who's trying to build a foundation – build bricks – on the outside is to figure out ways where I can build a foundation on the outside from the inside. So that may consist of contacting the United Way, Big Brothers, different anti-gang organizations in my community who need legal research help, who needs some typing done, because I'm rich in time. You may not have time to do these things, I can do it for you.

Gordo was willing to reach out not only to family and friends, but also community organizations in his effort to build connections with the outside.

Gordo was particularly creative in the way he was trying to “pitch a tent” (rather than a permanent home) in prison, but he was not the only one.

Julio, just months away from his parole eligibility date on his five-to-seven year sentence for drug possession, told me about the way he was using family and technology to build and maintain connections. His niece had set up a Facebook page for him, and he began hearing from friends he hadn't heard from in years. She would upload pictures of him from the visiting room, and he would talk on the phone with her to provide or approve updates and friend requests. He said that it was good to have someone on the streets like that.

Difficulties Maintaining a Connection

Keeping in contact with friends and family is hard. We know from the literature that time, money, and emotional energy are scarce resources for the kith and kin of people in prison (Christian 2005; Comfort 2002; Comfort 2008). Nevertheless, for some men, direct contact through phone, letters, and visits is essential to their managing of the incarceration experience. Others are orientated to the outside through actively preparing for release and reentry, whether by saving up money from employment or participating in programming that may help toward legitimate employment on the streets. Another aspect of an outward orientation is that the cognitive reference point is life outside of prison. Thus, when drawing analogies or talking about examples, they come from life beyond the walls rather than within them.

Given the structural function of the prison, to separate and isolate, it is unsurprising that incarcerated people find it difficult to maintain connections with the outside. I would ask inmates whether they had regular contact with their people, and many expressed their difficulty in doing so. Casiano was nearing five years in prison and he reported that he had had no visits with family since his incarceration began. Peter, having served over thirteen years on a minimum eighteen-year sentence said that he had only “a toe hold” on relations with his family. Some had failed to forward him their address after moving or send him their new phone numbers.

Inmates also have to deal with an inability to be “there” for their families, to have a direct relationship and influence in their lives. Gordo told me about his frustrations:

What also becomes frustrating is my inability to, to be active in my son's life the way I would like to be active in his life. ... So, I understand that, you know, my physical absence completely changes the dynamic of how

he's being brought up.

I mention Megan Comfort's book, *Doing Time Together* (2008), and the concept of secondary prisonization of the friends and family who try to maintain a relationship with those inside prison. Gordo immediately responds to the idea.

My son's mother is – what you described is pretty much why we're in the situation we're in. Because she shouldn't have to be subject to it [secondary prisonization] and she feels she shouldn't have to be subject to it. She feels like she's being completely scrutinized when she comes to visit me. It's created a situation where I used to see her three times a week, where now, if I call, ... "Okay I'll come up in two – three weeks." ... And it's created a strain on our relationship as a result of the things she has to go through to get in.

He describes the difficulty he has in maintaining the relationship in part because of the treatment she receives from the prison administration and corrections officers during her visit.

I haven't seen my son for a couple of months, but when he used to come up regularly [with his mother], you know, the visit is an inconvenience. So now, as a result of the visit, having to sit out there for half an hour to get processed, and then they're being treated in a condescending and disparaging manner, now it kind of deters people from wanting to come and visit you.

He also describes how he understands that she is the facilitator of his relationship with his son. So the treatment of visitors not only affects his relationship with his partner, it also affects his relationship with his son by proxy.

Difficulties in maintaining a connection can also weigh heavily on a person's psyche. Earlier I mentioned that Charlie had reported being "physically in here but mentally on the streets." He later said that sometimes after talking to people on the street he would have to "block it out" because "there's nothing I can do" to help in there difficulties.

The effects of this separation and the difficulty in overcoming it can run counter to the interests of the facility's goals of limited inmate disciplinary problems. For example, Fabian, mentioned earlier who was relying on his routine to help cope with his emotional difficulties, relayed what had happened about a year prior to the interview:

[F:] I've been able to control myself a little more, be more disciplined, and stuff like that. One of my cousins, he had got killed about a year ago. He was like my best friend as so I was just a mess emotionally.

[EE:] I bet. Were you able to go out to the funeral?

[F:] No, I wasn't at all. I got some stuff from it, but I wasn't able to go.

His disciplinary reports verify that he was acting out and getting sent to segregation, which was, according to him, because he was "a mess emotionally" over the loss of people close to him. The loss of his family member and best friend was no doubt traumatic, and he was not able to attend the funeral of this loved one. In fact, it would be another two years at least before he could visit his cousin's grave and mourn in person.

Inmate Responses to Administration and Separation

The prison, through its deprivations, destruction of identity, and brutalization of social relations, is a highly dehumanizing environment. In this section I use short ethnographic profiles to present a classification of expected responses to this identity demolition in terms of conflict versus reconciliation and convict versus community orientation. I investigate the ways in which a person reconstructs their humanity after a

long and on-going process of destruction. Finally, I argue that the responses are a part of what we recognize as the prison social order but that they are also part of a moral order that has as yet gone uninvestigated.

Under the circumstances of deprivation and dehumanization, we can expect a number of ways in which identity is reconstructed and managed. The illustrations above present a spectrum of responses, from a con's con with a change of heart, to a regulator, to a mentor, to a contender, to first-timer who thinks perhaps this is not his last bid. In virtually all cases, the reconstruction of identity is carried out through implicit, sometimes explicit, moral claims. These reconstructions are also on-going processes — daily attempts to create meaning and order through behaviors and ideas.

Predictable responses to identity demolition include rejection of and rebellion against the prison administrative authority and order; isolation from and regulation of inmate behavior; claims of benevolent authority and mentorship over younger and less experienced inmates; and enactment of religious redemption and rebirth. These responses are not mutually exclusive, but each highlights a different modality of conflict or reconciliation across two continuums: the prison administrative order and the individual identification with other inmates.

The identities described in Table 2 below provide a typology of responses, but they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are ideal types that highlight the conflicts and reconciliations present across the prison administrative order and the inmate social and moral order.

One particularly common reconstruction of identity is through a rejection of the system of power and justice and its representatives that arrested, judged, convicted, and imprisoned the individual. This rejection is often enacted through uncooperative behavior and sometimes verbal and physical violence. The inmate believes that system of order proposed by the prison administration is one that is actively seeking to prolong his incarceration, destroy him as an individual personality, and that he and his body is simply an object that is used for the economic gain of the officers and administration working at the prison and for the economic gain of the government at large. The inmate who takes up this response is often considered a “problem” inmate, prone to disciplinary action. He or she might consider herself a “convict”, rather than an “inmate” (Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001a). One example of such a response is found in Jorge.

Jorge is a 48-year-old Latino male. He is currently serving a 3–10 year drug possession sentence. He has been in and out of prison since he was 13 or 14 years old. At the beginning of our conversation he stated, “I’ve been discriminated against. I don’t have a lot of good things to say about prison.” As is clear by his sentence structure, he may appear before parole several times before his maximum release date is reached. He has already been denied once. “I humiliate myself before them [the parole board]. Now I realize I need to stay out [of that meeting]. They say, ‘here’s another one with a mother [who is sick].’” Further, he says that he is not getting treatment for a pain in his leg. Finally, he has been at the facility for five

years but has not been able to get an in-house job, and thus he gets no good time off his sentence. He becomes increasingly agitated, and after about twenty minutes he cuts the interview short, saying he is getting too upset and he leaves.

Another response often labeled as a “problem” is through active participation in policing the inmate social order as a regulator. These inmates use their personal strength and social networks in sometimes violent ways to force adherence to unwritten rules of moral order that are entirely separate from, and sometimes contradictory to, the prison administrative order. These inmates are typically older and more experienced in prison life. However, instead of using soft interpersonal skills to negotiate a moral order, they enact an identity of moral agent through physical coercion. They despise the declining adherence to a common social order of inmates based on age, incarceration experience, crime type, and neighborhood/community affiliation. I encountered this form of identity construction in Donovan.

Donovan is a 40-year-old white man serving a 25–35-year sentence for six counts of armed robbery while masked, with multiple subordinate counts of assault and battery, home invasion, and conspiracy. He has no prior incarcerations in Massachusetts but has adult and juvenile incarcerations in other states, including an adult escape from prison. When I met him he had served sixteen years of his sentence, with another nine to go before he was eligible for parole. However, he also has a “from and after” of twenty years,

which means he has an addition 20 years to serve for another conviction which is not served concurrent with his 25-35 year sentence. When I asked him how he saw himself, Donovan said he was an isolationist and a prison vigilante. "Before we were policing our own. Now things have changed. About a year an a half ago I become isolationist, and I'm happier." He claims that the "cops" (corrections officers) love him for his inmate policing practices. This claim is despite the fact that he has spent significant time in "the hole" (special management unit) and the even stricter DDU (departmental disciplinary unit), which he says he prefers. He laughed when he told me I should interview his best friend, who happens to be a Black Muslim also serving a long sentence for armed robbery. "You wouldn't believe who my best friend is! We should hate each other, but we're best friends."

Another response to identity demolishment is to recreate an identity based on prison experience and inmate solidarity and the self-worth derived from it. Inmates who take up this path take younger or less-experienced inmates under their advisement. They become mentors to others, helping them to negotiate the prison administrative order, the inmate social order, and manage the often overwhelming personal experiences of incarceration. This identity is derived from reconciliation with the prison administrative order. It seeks to limit conflict with that order through

profound understanding of the administrative rules and regulations and manipulations of those regulations. When I met Gordon, he fit this type well.

Gordon came to me as a referred interview from his best friend, Donovan. He is a 43-year-old black male who has never been married and has no children. He is in his seventeenth year of a 20—24 year sentence, his second state incarceration. He is very calm during our conversation, and says, “I’m laid back, sometimes outgoing. I’m a jokester. I’m patient—a people person...Don’t know how I became that!” He has become a mentor to newer or younger inmates during his time inside. “Guys befriend me because I play sports a lot—basketball, weights. They can lean on me, talk to me.” He is currently employed in industries and has over fifteen different program certificates.

A fourth identity recreation is one which is entirely compatible to the prison administrative order, but which does not actively label itself as such. This identity is rooted in a transformation of self through religious (re)awakening, self-help, and rehabilitative programming such as drug treatment and/or education. This identity is not in solidarity with inmates as a social order, but derives an individual identity through association with a broader religious community.

Transformations are, of course, entirely possible. An example of such a transformation is found in Gordo.

Gordo is a 33-year-old African American man who is currently in his fourth year of a 7– 10 year sentence for firearm possession. He has prior state and county incarcerations, as well as juvenile incarcerations. He has been labeled an “armed career criminal” by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This means that Gordo faces enhanced sentencing upon conviction of felony crimes. This designation occurred because of his repeated offenses with weapons. A supervising corrections program officer, upon hearing that Gordo was being interviewed, exclaimed, “Oh, he’s a good one! He used to be a con’s con.” As the officer spread his arms out to improbably large proportions, indicating the number of disciplinary reports and other administrative paperwork that have been filed on Gordo’s behalf, he continued, “His folder is this thick. But he’s really changed. He’s done every program, participates in the Inside Out program....” The Inside Out program brings area high school students into the prison to hear talks by inmates in hopes to keep them from repeating the inmates’ mistakes, and inmate participants are considered the “best of the bunch.” When I asked why he agreed to the interview, Gordo responded, “You want to change [things]. I want to help you do that.”

Within ten minutes of our interview, Gordo tells me, “If I were to describe myself, I would say I’m going through a resurrection.” He spent a significant portion of the interview telling me about his life, events that occurred during his prior incarcerations,

and what lead to those incarcerations. He claimed proudly and with humor, “At one point in my life I was a con’s con. ... I was the reason why some of these prisons were the way they was, to be honest with you.”

Table 2: A Typology of Responses to Administrative Order and Inmate Orientation

Locus of Individual		
Orientation	Intersection with Prison Administrative Order	
	Conflict	Reconciliation
Inside	Convict, Vigilante	Jailhouse lawyer
Outside	Contender	Religious and programs adherent

3 Embodied Incarceration: Managing the Body and Space in Prison

The human experience is an embodied existence. This is to say that to be human is to experience the world through our body, to live in a material world, and to construct our identity, meanings, and social lives through physical interaction with the environment other embodied beings. Anthropologists, psychologists, philosophers, and sociologists have all developed rich literatures articulating how our bodies serve as sites of knowledge and meaning as well as the ways that embodied experience and interaction define who we are as individuals and how we understand the world.

As such, embodiment is one lens through which we can understand the nature of individual behavior, identity, social order, and ethical claims made in prison. Further, we can understand the nature of the prison administration-inmate dynamic through observing practices of bodily control. Douglas ([1966] 1993) demonstrated that the study of the body and rituals of cleanliness and separation teach us much about the surrounding social and political order in which these practices are embedded. She argued that such practices

... are better interpreted as symbols of the relation between parts of society, as mirroring designs of hierarchy or symmetry which apply in the larger social system. (4)

She further points to the social dynamics that may be symbolized through the body itself:

So also can the processes of ingestion portray political absorption. Sometimes bodily orifices seem to represent points of entry or exit to social units, or bodily perfection can symbolise an ideal theocracy. (4)

Thus in addition to controlling specific behaviors in the cell or dining hall, the written and unwritten edicts over food, its consumption and preparation, bodily hygiene, appearance, and the cell all point to the relationships of power inside the prison and the relationships of power between the prison and its occupants and the free world.

The importance of studying the body as a site of power and knowledge in the prison cannot be overstated. As Foucault ([1975] 1995) highlighted,

... in our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain 'political economy' of the body; even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishment, even they use 'lenient' methods involving confinement or correction, *it is always the body that is at issue* – the body, its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission. (25, emphasis added)

Even as he claimed that the nature of punishment moved from public to private and corporal to moral, he understood that the body is still central to submission and control. It is appropriate, then, that this investigation of the prison and society begins at the most fundamental level, that of the body, its management, and its relation to others and space.

As we will see, management of the body and of the institutional landscape is directly related to the formal rules of the administrative order, the informal organization of the inmate society, and the ways that these two systems of control shape and reflect the social and moral order inside the prison. The administrative order

dictates every facet of the prisoner's body. It controls what is eaten and when it is eaten; regulates hygienic practices such as how often showers are taken and when and it destroys the privacy of the use of the toilet; and the administration also prescribes appearance, movement, language, and gesture.

Yet even as these controls are happening, inmates cope with them and formulate their own rules and practices relating to the body that conform to particular social and ethical codes that are not defined by the administration. Just as the official protocols reflect specific relations of power and morality between the administrative, officer, and inmate societies, so do the bodily precepts of the prisoner population. We can begin to understand the social organization of the prison and its meaning through attention to the very basis of inmate life---the management of his or her corporal being.

I also demonstrate how the administrative order regulates space and how people occupy and move through the prison topography. Where the prisoners are allowed, when they are allowed there, and how they enter and exit areas are all governed by official rules. As always, inmates, too, control space in ways that rely on moral claims and power relations. I examine critical spaces in an inmate's life---the cell and the dining hall (chow hall)---as particular areas of social, ethical, and political significance for the incarcerated. How sanitation and order is managed (or mismanaged) in the cell exemplifies negotiation strategies, a desire for a perception of physical and moral cleanliness, and a response to administrative control. Social and political order can be mapped through the spatial distribution of people in the chow hall. And in both of

these cases, the management of space and the people within those spaces is justified through recourse to moral language.

Conceptualizing Embodied Incarceration

I use a theory of embodied incarceration that applies the theoretical claims of Durkheim, Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu, and Foucault to the prison experience to explain the behaviors observed and to contextualize their meanings both within the prison itself and within broader society. By applying concepts related to a sociology of the body³⁶, including embodiment, habitus, docile bodies, backstage, and interiority, I explain how people experience incarceration, why they develop particular habits, how these habits represent embodied knowledge and power relations, and how elements of the self-discipline developed inside the prison walls carry into the community once incarceration ends.

The importance of understanding the role of the body as enactors and reflections of social relations has its sociological foundations as far back as Durkheim. His study of totemism ([1915] 2001) demonstrates clearly his belief that the body was the source of social organization through symbolism, a site of imprinting social reality (through, for example, self-inflicted wounds during funeral rites or the tattooing of tribal markings on the body), and the very means of social organization through congregation and its ensuing collective effervescence (Shilling 2005).

³⁶ The volume of sociological theoretical and empirical work related to the body and embodiment is far too expansive to summarize here, and it is but one part of the broader intellectualization of the body. Overviews of sociological treatments can be found in Shilling (2007) and Williams and Bendelow (1998). Cregan (2006) provides a particularly elucidating book-length review of critical sociological approaches, and a brief review of the key arguments can be found in Crossley (2005).

Following Durkheim, Mauss developed an understanding of bodily actions, what he termed “techniques of the body,” which have a social distribution; that is, these techniques are shared within social groups, though they often vary across groups. These actions, according to Crossley (2005), are not simply variations of movements. “Rather they are collective techniques for getting a grip on the world, making sense of it and making out within it” (450). Mauss called the fact of these techniques and the social knowledge they carried *habitus*:

Please note that I use the Latin word – it should be understood in France – *habitus*. ...These ‘habits’ do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, prestiges. In them we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties. (Mauss 1979, quoted in Crossley 2005:450)

Merleau-Ponty (1962) elaborated on this idea, arguing that habits are themselves forms of knowledge and understanding:

If habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an involuntary action what then is it? It is knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort. (144)

Merleau-Ponty rejected Cartesian dualism and was particularly interested in developing a philosophy of the body that understood being and action as not necessarily relying on cognitive reflection. Thus he developed an understanding of action in the form of habit as embodied knowledge which is prior to reflexive thought.

This line of theorizing, from Durkheim to Mauss to Merleau-Ponty, leads directly to Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*. McNay (2012) summarizes Bourdieu’s *habitus* as one in which,

...embodied being is the result of the incorporation of the tendencies of the world into the body that are then lived as enduring physical and psychological dispositions. (233)

This conception of habitus stretches beyond Mauss' and Merleau-Ponty's in that it captures not simply ways of understanding the world but also dynamics of social order related to class and power (Crossley 2005). Key, also, is the emphasis on *enduring* "dispositions," hinting that the practices of habitus outlive their originating circumstances.

We can now relate these foundational concepts of embodiment to the prison through Foucault. Foucault ([1975] 1995) argues that "the body as object and target of power" (136) was the on-going political and cultural development throughout the 18th century and beyond. Discipline of the body was implemented through spatial manipulation, temporal regulation, and constant surveillance (141ff). Foucault argues that these practices of discipline create "docile bodies."

...What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over other's bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. (138)

His exemplification of the creation of docile bodies through the use of the specific penal practices resonates even today.

These docile bodies are the specific intended outcomes of an architectural and philosophical practice of the Panopticon.

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of

consciousness and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effect, even if it is discontinuous in its action...in short, that *the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers*. (201, emphasis added)

I argue that this “bearing” is manifested through that which Bourdieu calls habitus.

The Panopticon, with its Orwellian all-encompassing gaze, surprisingly, was developed not from the Right, despite its use as an instrument of surveillance, control, and punishment. It developed from the liberal progressive movement, from the very same thinker that endorsed economic and religious freedom, the abolition of physical punishments, the death penalty, and slavery, and the founder of utopian socialism. While seen at the time as an economical architectural innovation that results in self-disciplining inmates, the mechanism of this self-discipline involves the destruction of privacy and a complete control of movement. In order for prisoners to become the bearers of the power that confines them, they must internalize the control system so completely that it becomes a part of their body.

Foucault takes the idea of bearing power relations through the body more explicit:

...He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; becomes the principle of his own subjection. (202–203)

Thus, through manipulations of space, time, and surveillance, the individual body as object and agent becomes the target and practitioner of its own discipline.

In summary, the prison as a site of embodied incarceration is one which has space, time, and social relations structured in such a way as to have the intended

product of a corporeal knowledge, a habitus, of self-discipline. Evidence of this intention and its success is everywhere in the carceral space and will be demonstrated below.

The Body

While it is true that the prison inscribes its power and discipline on the bodies of inmates through their pre-reflexive actions and ways of being, it is also true that inmates enact their own identities and social and moral relations through their body. Evidence of this is equally present in the ways that prisoners actively and subconsciously engage with others and their surroundings, carry their bodies, and cultivate their appearance, even within the confines of incarcerated life. I argue, then, that two separate collective and ethical systems are simultaneously being embodied in prison – that of the prison administration and that of the captive society.

A considerable facet of incarcerated life is its lack of privacy. I draw on Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), especially on the "back regions," to understand the ways that prisoners experience lack of privacy. Salaman's (2006) concept of "interiority" is useful in understanding how prisoners cope with this lack of privacy through techniques of the body (restrained behaviors) as well as mental and emotional introversion.

Two pervasive, constant, and necessary elements of every person's life are satisfaction of the need for sustenance and a regular practice of hygiene, two things directly related to the body and its maintenance. Eating and physical cleanliness are two

elements of daily (or near daily) life for inmates and penal institutions are required to provide for them by law. Given that eating occurs three times a day, and hygiene practices are typically daily occurrences, these are behaviors around which the prison administration has developed a myriad of regulations and control mechanisms.

In addition to hygiene and sustenance, other facets of life relating to the individual body are also formally governed through administrative rules. These facets include dress, movements, gestures, and body modification.

Food: Eating and Cooking

Food is required for life, but its preparation and consumption are much more than the maintenance of biological beings. Starting with Levi-Strauss ([1966] 1983), the relationship between food and culture has been explored deeply and widely (see Counihan and Esterik 2013 for an overview). Recent works on the role of food in prison³⁷ are shedding light on the ways in which it shapes and reflects systems of power and social organization (Brisman 2008; Godderis 2006). Below I present the consumption of food in the context of a bodily experience and the preparation of food as a social act with moral significance.

Prisons are notorious sites of bad food. In fact, serving awful-tasting food is often seen as a just punishment for the incarcerated and in some cases it is used as method of control³⁸ (Barclay 2014). Add to this the inherent sensory experience of preparing and

³⁷ For an excellent survey of theories of food and studies of food and foodways in prison, see Smoyer (2013).

³⁸ The constitutionality of using food, specifically the Nutriload, as a form of punishment or a disciplinary measure has been challenged (for example, Prude v. Clarke 2012). At this time, use of unpleasant food specifically as a control mechanism remains legal.

eating food, and the fact that meals occur at least three times a day, and food and its consumption becomes a particularly salient feature of incarcerated life.

Of the forty-six inmates interviewed for this dissertation, thirty-five were specifically asked the question, “What are some of the things you miss now that you’re inside?”³⁹ By far the most common answer was family and/or friends. However, food was mentioned as a specific response nearly over twenty-five percent of the time (9/37). When inmates did not mention food as a response to that particular question, they often talked about the food they purchased through the commissary as an alternative or supplement to the institutionally-provided food (15/37), or when discussing cooking meals or as a cause of stress (3/39). When they were not asked the question at all they still mentioned food during discussion of commissary (two of the eleven not asked). In total, thirty-one of the forty-six interviewed (sixty-seven percent) spoke specifically of the quality of food inside and of ways of dealing with a perceived lack of nutrition, poor taste, or lack of quantity.

While food itself was often mentioned as something that was desired from the outside, one individual, Stephen, a twenty-seven-year old who was starting the sixth year of his seven-to-ten-year sentence, mentioned not just the food, but also the very objects used to consume food:

EE: What are some of the things you miss now that you’re inside?

S: Everything.

EE: Can you give me an example?

S: I want to use metal utensils. Drink out of a *glass* glass. And go grocery

³⁹ See Table 6 for a full count of the responses to this question.

shopping at a grocery store and not fill out a bubble sheet.

Here we see how the very textures of the materials used to consume food are a part of the experience of eating, and how those textures are associated with non-incarcerated life. Stephen also mentioned the act of shopping, another sensory-filled experience associated with non-incarcerated life.

In addition to satisfying health and taste needs, the consumption of food is also related to identity. Prisoners have fought for and been granted the right to eat food that conforms to religious identity or abstain from eating during religious holidays (ACLU, n.d.). But particular foods are also tied to ethnic identities. Several inmates interviewed detailed in great length how they went about making *mofongo*, a traditional Puerto Rican dish made from *masa* and plantains with various fillings. Andres, a 38-year-old inmate in the sixth year of his sentence, described it this way:

We make our own mofongos (smiles). ... We use the chips. We crush the chips down, crush some saltine crackers, make that for the masa. Season it up, then just put the rice, soups, and chili, all that in the middle, whatever we're going to put in it. We'll make a sweet and sour sauce with, like, jelly, mustard, hot sauce. And we wrap it up in a plastic bag real long [shows how he wraps it up. It's clear he uses the full size trash bags.] ... Then after it's done if you want to warm it up we'll throw it in the microwave.

Another inmate, Casiano, detailed a similar procedure that was scaled to feed several men at once:

We make mofongo. It's like a wrap. We use chips and saltines for the dough, the size of a desktop. We put plastic bags on the bunk, spread out the dough, and put in meat, steak, rice, soups, cheese, whatever in the middle. Roll it up, cut it up. It's fat boy food.

Yet another inmate, Jose, was happy to see that they had "some Spanish food" available for purchase through the commissary such as Goya products.

Xavier, a 32-year old serving his second sentence, stated that he did not eat (red) meat. There were no vegetarian meals available in prison, so he supplemented his diet through purchases in the commissary. His typical food purchases were brown rice, fish, and green tea.

Prison is a site of identity demolition, but inmates also go to great lengths to preserve certain identities, through ethnic foods, cultural, and religious practices.

Personal Hygiene

The links between personal hygiene and that which is good are deeply engrained in the human psyche. These links have been made in cultures around the world and across time, from Judaism to Islam to Buddhism to Hinduism and Sikhism, from biblical-era tribes thousands of years ago to modern day urbanites. That which is holy is clean and good, a truth so pervasive that perforce things which are unclean are seen as unholy and bad. Durkheim ([1915] 2001) and Douglas ([1966] 1993) both recognized the power of these facts in the ordering of religious and social life. As Douglas puts it so succinctly,

Whether they are rigorously observed or violated, there is nothing in our rules of cleanness to suggest any connection between dirt and sacredness.

... Holiness and impurity are at opposite poles. (7)

But rules about cleanliness are not only claims about sacredness. She also states,

Dirt is essentially disorder. ... Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organize the environment. ...

For I believe that ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose a system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and

female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created. (2, 4)

She draws a line between rules of cleanliness and separation and an attempt to create order.

Douglas argued that the rituals of purity regulating relations between the sexes and body pollution were indicative of the social and political order of the indigenous cultures from which she was drawing empirical data. I argue that now, just as then, we can tease out the social, moral, and political orders of the prison by analyzing the formal and informal rules and behaviors related to cleanliness in the prison.

This belief in the necessity of cleanliness is upheld through policies of the prison administration. While there are no official declarations as to what constitutes hygiene, “Failure to maintain acceptable hygiene” is a category 4 offense⁴⁰. And yet, the materials spaces for such hygienic practices are severely limited, and at times limit the abilities of people to practice regular and adequate hygiene.

Inmates are regulated in the times and frequency that they can shower. In some institutions showers occur only every few days due to limited facilities. In other cases, showers are turned on for certain periods of the day only. If a person cannot be present while the water is available, they simply do not get to shower.

At Shirley, showers are turned on between 7:30 AM and 10:00 AM, a generous schedule. The institutional limitations on showering then, is minimal. Nevertheless, I heard numerous complaints from inmates about unhygienic people. Paulie, a 24-year-old serving his first prison sentence, complained about the guys who go to the gym and

⁴⁰ There are four categories of offenses in the MADOC system. The highest-level offenses are Category 1, and include such things as “Killing of another,” and the lowest-level offenses are in Category 4. See the Appendix for a list of offenses and a description of disciplinary sanctions.

return to their cells without showering. Damien, a 28-year-old who is 10 months from finishing his three-year sentence, noted people who say they don't have time: "What do you mean you don't have time? We got nothing but time in here!"

While no person I interviewed seemed to have inadequate hygiene, I did share in one of the inmates' experiences. While I was observing inmates in their living units from one of the CPO offices, I could sense a strong scent of urine. I noticed three inmates going in and out of a cell near the front of the unit and I asked one of the officers what was going on. He explained to me, "Yeah that guy is a nutter. Constantly urinates all over his bed." The three inmates were cleaning his cell for him: throwing out his mattress pad and replacing it, mopping down his bunk and floor, and putting his clothing items in the laundry. Such was the strength of the noxiousness of his cell and the desire of these men to live in cleanliness.

While the above case is an example of a man seemingly mentally incapable of maintaining his own cleanliness, destitution can also lead to difficulty in maintaining a particular level of body care. All hygiene products must be purchased through the commissary, including soap, toothpaste, and shampoo. This is to say that indigent inmates have very almost no access to the body care products ("cosmetics" is the term used by inmates at Shirley) that people use on a daily basis. Paulie lamented,

You got people that just don't care here, and there's people who just can't afford it. People that try to maintain good hygiene but they just can't afford it, they don't have the money to do it. Which is a shame.

In these cases, inmates must rely on the institutionally-provided "duty bags" and materials from other inmates. Bob, a 66-year-old man serving a life sentence, says that

other inmates used to provide assistance. “A couple of guys on the block helped me out, but they moved.” Because he is indigent he receives a duty bag, but the bureaucracy surrounding his new arrival to Shirley meant he had not received it at the time of our interview. “I’m using up what [those guys] gave me,” Bob reported. Soon he will have to find more people to donate to him if he is to have basic hygienic cosmetics.

Movement and Gesture

As noted above, body control is a primary site of the prison administration and inmate conflict. The degree of control over inmates’ movements, gestures, and language points to its importance as a domain of symbolic, not simply actual, deference to correction officer control and the prison administration.

Given that standing counts occur four times a day every day, they are a flashpoint for power struggles over body control. The Inmate Handbook details the official expectations of inmate behavior with respect to standing counts:

Counts are very important to the proper running of an institution, and infractions of regulations pertaining to counts are very serious. Standing counts are held at approximately 7:10am, 11:15am, 4:50pm, and 9:45pm. Once “five (5) minutes to count” is announced, inmates are to move back to their cells. It will be the responsibility of each inmate to be in his cell, standing at the cell door and clearly visible to the officers. Making unnecessary movements, failing to stand, attempting to distract the counting officer by conversation, will result in disciplinary action. When an emergency count is announced, inmates will report to their cells and remain there until the count is verified. During all PM counts, cell lights must be turned on.

The above rules clearly lay out an ethical claim, that counts are “very important” and infractions are thus “very serious.” Further it outlines clearly that men are expected to physically stand for count and limit all movements, every time.

This counting is not a functionally neutral activity. While not set up specifically for this purpose, it interrupts all manner of activities, from visiting with loved ones to accessing library resources, to attending programs for rehabilitation. It limits the access to resources inmates have by demanding their return to their cells during every standing count. Although it is necessary to account for inmates, it presents an opportunity for officers to harass inmates, to demand that they respond in silence and utter capitulation to the regulation of body control. The process humiliates inmates by the subtle infantilization it entails. Andres was frustrated at the need to stand up for every count:

Andres: It's pointless. (Laughs) I'm sittin' up watching T.V. You're staring right at me, I'm alive. And as soon as you go like this (starts to stand up) they walk away. Are you serious?

That there was an escalating conflict between Andres and the administrative order's demands for a standing position is evidenced through the disciplinary reports he had acquired between 2009 and 2010. His file included a 30-day loss of gym for lying down on his bed during count on May 26, 2009. The next day he received a sanction of a 60-day loss of yard time for lying on his bed again during count. Two days later, on May 29, 2009, he again failed to stand for count and received a 45-day loss of access to canteen. The official record does not describe how the *détente* was reached, but there was not another report for failure to stand until August of 2010, for which he received what amounts to a cautionary sanction of a two-day lost of access to canteen.

Space

Control of space is an expression of moral order. Who occupies what space at what time is of particular interest to the prison administration, its agents of control, and the incarcerated. Movement through space is also highly regulated, both by the prison administration and the inmates.

Cell

The inmate cell in Shirley is a 6' by 9' rectangle that includes a desk, a wastebasket, a footlocker, two beds, and an open toilet. That is 54 square-feet for two adult men, their meager furniture, and their possessions.

Few people in the US who have not been in prison understand the nature of living in a small space with an open toilet and at least one other person. Although similar to the negotiations that take place in any shared space, such as with roommates or officer co-workers, the negotiations of shared living in a cell must account for the extensive administrative strictures as well as the shared use of nearly every surface, object—including the toilet—and as well as shared time. Particular habits and agreements are established in order to live with a modicum of civility and sanity.

Prisons are dirty places. Cleanliness, then, is often one of the first ingrained, embodied practices of incarcerated life. When living with another person, as outside of a prison, negotiations must take place regarding cleanliness. In addition to the common cultural associations between morality and cleanliness that all people live with, incarcerated people must inhabit places (prisons) considered socially dirty, in small

spaces that limit the ability to manage cleanliness, and with people they did not get to choose. For example, it is well known that sexual offenders, especially child sexual offenders, are reviled in prison. Nearly every inmate would avoid living with a known sex offender if possible. Andres noted to me,

Me, personally, I tell the guy straight out, 'this is what I'm here for, my paperwork is here if you like to see it.'"

Andres wanted to make sure there was no ambiguity about what crime he was convicted of, so as not to be mistaken for one of the pariah class. Sex offenders, however, are the social extreme of moral uncleanness. There are many people in prisons who would simply rather not live with a messy cellmate, or one who does not shower regularly.

The official rules and regulations regarding "cell decorum" are numerous, speaking to the importance of cleanliness and spatial control to the administration. A general statement of the expectations is made in the Inmate Handbook:

All cells are expected to be clean and in compliance with cell decorum regulations 24 hours per day seven days per week. Cell decorum regulations are posted in each unit.

Unit Correction Officers will determine unit clean up time daily. During this time, cleaning supplies will be made available. Inmates are responsible for the cleanliness of their cells.

If an inmate refuses to comply with the cell decorum, disciplinary action may be taken.

These expectations are buttressed by a number of Unit Rules and Regulations. No less than 17 of the 40 unit regulations relate to the cell, more if proscriptions regarding general living unit decorum (rather than the cell cited specifically) are included. A sample of the regulations include:

- Do not hang any article from a bed, railing, vent, window, or cell door. Towels must be hung on the towel rack only.
- Family photographs and institution calendars, etc., may be affixed with scotch tape to the 2X3' area painted above the desk. Pictures are not to be placed in frames or layered one over another. No photographs for items will be attached to other walls, footlockers, or appliances. Inmates may not display any nude, semi nude, or sexually suggestive pictures of any kind are allowed to be displayed [sic]. Also, nothing that can be considered offensive, discriminatory, divisive, or in violation of 103 CMR 430 Disciplinary Proceedings is allowed.
- Inmates must make their bed and leave their cells in orderly condition prior to 8:30am work call. Beds are made according to the sketch posted at the Officer's Podium.
- No curtains, window coverings, or rugs are allowed.
- Televisions and radios are the only things permitted on the top of the desk.
- Keep all shoes under the bed.
- Keep trash can [sic] by the cell door near the vent. Empty your trash daily in the trash barrels provided in the common area.

The regulations are minute and exacting in their detail of control over the cell space and the mode of its occupation. It should be clear here that these rules are about much more than the safety and security of the institution.

This sort of regulation of the living space of the prisoner to such a degree is most certainly about a particular aesthetics of control and decency in this country. While having a messy bed or shoes in the middle of the cell does not impair the safe and secure functioning of the prison, it does not cohere to ingrained aesthetics of austerity that are a part of the popular view of what the "proper" institution of discipline should be. They are indicative of a lack of control person and as such need to be banished from the prison.

That this sort of austerity is an aesthetic rather than necessary safety issue can be demonstrated by comparing prison systems across different countries. While volunteering in New Jersey I met an English woman who was also volunteering as an

educator in a nearby facility. She was continuing her volunteerism from when she was living in England. It was nearing the end of the year holidays and she remarked to me how awful it was that they would not let the men decorate their cells. She noted that they could not even hang a picture of Santa Claus, where as in England the men could hang up colored lights and decorate trees. Similarly, prisons in Scandinavia are known for their permissive environments and encourage their inmates to hang their own artwork and decorate their units (Larson 2013; James 2013).

Whether a bed is made or shoes are kept under the bed at all times seemingly has nothing to do with the safety and security of the prison. However, the administration generally and officers have reasons for demanding such standards. Weapons or contraband could be easily hidden in a messy environment, and thus neatness is demanded of the inmates. Pest control and the spread of disease (including MRSA) is also a concern, and thus cleanliness is a priority. This rationale can be seen in a profile of a female CO at Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center, the maximum-security facility across the parking lot from Shirley, provided by Conover (2010):

She oversees "inmate movements" from one part of the prison to another, directs searches for contraband, assists in applying and removing restraints and, in the inmates' "pods" (their living quarters), helps to enforce the rules regarding cell cleanliness. "I'm a clean nut; I drive people crazy. I said to him, 'You can't have it like this: no dirty dishes; put the food away; you're gonna get bugs.' They come from prisons that are roach city. He said: 'The cell's clean! It's just my lunch stuff.' I'm like, I don't care.

So it is clear that cleanliness and neatness both have a functional role in security, but it is also clear that specific aesthetics of a prison are cultural.

What is not discussed in the literature or by officers is that the degree of control over such a small space increases the likelihood of the rules being broken. Although officers could overlook infractions, any non-conforming behavior can be punished for violating the rules. A review of disciplinary reports bears this out. In one such case Casiano was written up for having an “unmade bed at security round, even after told not to.” Even the disciplinary officer saw the report for what it was and dismissed the ticket. Here we see a symbolic struggle for control between an inmate and the administrative order.

Proximity, the sharing of space, creates social entanglements. Conversations are overheard, blurring the boundaries of intimacy, actions are seen, and consequences are shared. The distinctions between what Goffman (1959) calls “front region” and “backstage,” the places where a person acts according to roles activated by a particular setting and the places where a person behaves most truly themselves unbound by social performance dictates, are almost completely eliminated in prison.

Privacy is nearly non-existent in prison, even when defecating, sleeping, or relaxing. When I asked what he missed the most, Lemar, a man serving his fifteenth year of a twenty-two-year sentence for home invasion, said food and privacy.

L: And most of all privacy. You just never alone around here.

EE: It must be a *little* bit easier now that you have a single cell.

L: Yeah, but at least every 30 minutes somebody’s walking by, shine the flash light in there. I mean I know they have to, but it’d be nice, some privacy. And the only place you really, really have privacy here is in the shower. ...The good thing about here is you have your own little stalls. In Concord it’s just the way you imagine it. There’s at least two or three people in there.

Proximity and lack of privacy create a moral order around the notions of cleanliness and interiority. During the interviews, there were no questions specifically asking about cell management. However, the nature of communal living came up, often when talking about what caused stress or what constituted a good or bad day. The two most discussed topics regarding cells were cleanliness and regulation of toilet behavior. Similar to any institutional or shared setting such as roommates or office mates, inmates must negotiate, whether explicitly or tacitly, rules of cleanliness when living with each other. Andres provided an example of the negotiation of who cleans the cell:

If I was in the cell first, 'you clean one day, I clean the next day.

But in addition to a discussion of orders of cleanliness, Andres also immediately discusses behavior that can lead to disciplinary sanctions:

You do anything stupid, you got anything hidden in here, you take responsibility for it. No need for me to go down with you. Now, if we're both drinking then we both going down. If I don't drink and you drink, you're into that, you make that bullshit, take responsibility for that. Don't let me go down for that.'

In the course of his description of how he negotiates living with another person, Andres jumps from clarifying that he is not a sex offender to establishing a general shared cleaning schedule, to managing illicit behavior and sanctions all within a single conversational arc. The boundaries between social cleanliness (not being a sex offender), physical cleanliness (managing the cell space), and moral cleanliness (managing illicit behavior and its consequences) are clearly all affiliated and even blurred.

This type of negotiation is common. Damien explains how negotiations are carried out.

Usually the person that comes in conforms to however that person was

already living. When my roommate moved in—I got a bottom bunk now—I told him, “Listen.” The big thing is using the bathroom, ‘cause you live in a bathroom, basically. ... That’s one of the biggest issues. I tell roommates, I don’t care if you have to use the bathroom in the middle of the night. Any time you got to use the bathroom, don’t hold it. You can mess up your insides. So I don’t care. If you have to wake up at 03:00 in the morning go flush the toilet seven times, then do it. It doesn’t bother me. When I first came here I had a roommate who said, “After 11:00 don’t flush the toilet.” Excuse me? You say what? If I have to pee or have to use it I’m not going to hold it for eight hours until it’s morning time again.

Paulie also mentioned his negotiation with his current cellie (cellmate):

I got a cellmate right now, he won't clean. He gots this one habit. He comes from the max. In the max, at night, you don't flush the toilet. So when he uses the bathroom at night he leaves it there. (EE: Because of the noise?) Yeah, because of the noise. It's a respect thing. But that stuff is--- (EE: Nasty)---Yeah. Leaving a ring on the toilet, I'm getting mad. You have to give and take. I got to choose. I had my floors waxed. So I'm cleaning it. You got to wipe it with cold water every morning. A I respectfully asked him not to wear shoes in the cell. So he does that.

Andres, Paulie, and Damien all described a process of negotiation with respect to cell order, and that order is one of social, physical, and moral cleanliness.

This emphasis on cleanliness is in no small part due to the unavoidable fact that the major feature of a cell is its open toilet. Repeatedly inmates mentioned the toilet, even though it was not a specific part of the interview prompts.

For example, Tony G. told me that he lives like a savage. I was surprised to hear him describe himself this way, but then he clarified. “Prison is the most dirtiest place to live in the world. We *living in the bathroom*.” Xavier went into even greater detail:

What it’s like living in a bathroom—all of our wealth is in our bathroom. A stock pile of cosmetics [hygiene products] represents wealth in prison terms. Five shampoos, ten bars of soap, fifty tunas, all stored in our bathroom. Having all of your possessions in a bathroom. If you have those things, things to be comfortable here.

Both Tony and Xavier are highlighting that the toilet is contaminating, symbolically and literally, all of the objects in the cell.

But material possessions are not the only concern. Living with an open toilet is degrading. Having no recourse to privacy when defecating destroys one of the main symbolic gestures we make at civilized behavior, that of separation of defecation from all other activities. The lack of privacy forces a person to constantly confront his basic animal nature and give up any pretense of human separation from the animal kingdom, a type of confrontation that is characteristically avoided in modernity. Such confrontation is typically manifested as disgust (Barcan 2005, 9).

The sociological and cultural literature on toilets and defecation returns repeatedly to concepts of contagion, control, and privacy. "According to the dictates of American culture, elimination is a private matter," notes Jarvis (Jervis 2001, 86). Not only is defecation a private matter individually, but also it is a body function that must remain separate from all others. Henry (1963) argued that the ability to eat in a place where there was filth was "an ultimate stage of dehumanization" (cited in Jervis P. 87). To make clear: the ability to eat where one defecates is to have lost one's humanity. This is something that inmates in prisons all across this country are confronted with on a daily basis.

"People care a great deal how they pee and shit. Their strivings for decency confront the facilities available to them as well as the social strictures and hierarchies that order who goes where. ... [The public restroom] is where, through our institutions, architects, and personal demeanor we negotiate privacy, surveillance, intimacy, and

pollution---symbolic and otherwise." (Molotch 2008, 60-1). Toilets are places which are highly symbolic of social and cultural meanings and difference. As Barcan (2005) argues, men's toilets are sites of dirt and distinctions, "places of both shame and decency... places that aim to minimize dirt but which are often themselves considered dirty" (11).

This cleanliness operates to re-establish an identity as a "clean" person and therefore a good person. The association between defecation and dirt, disease, and disorder is strong. Inmates work very hard to establish cleanliness as a routine, a clear attempt to mitigate the effects of living side-by-side with a toilet and no privacy. The toilet contaminates all the objects in the room. While this is a biological fact (Gerba, Wallis, and Melnick 1975), it is also a social fact.

Eating Hall

The organization of space in the chow hall (dining hall) in most prisons is highly regulated, both formally by the institution and informally by the inmates.

Entrance and exit into and out of the dining area is always strictly regulated. While the men eat they are watched carefully. But the men themselves carefully establish a spatial order that is tied to identity and place outside of the prison, the prison social order, and a moral order. Andres explains:

Spanish people will have one area, Blacks have one area, or whatever — Guys know each other from their neighborhood, doesn't have to be just secluded races. You can be a Black person who lives in Boston. You don't cross tables unless you live in that table [sic]. If you do by accident not knowing, you say, excuse me.

Simply sitting in a particular seat while eating in a communal environment becomes a particular social, moral, and at time political act. An example of the politics of where to sit in the dining hall came from Damien, a former local leader of the gang the Latin Kings.

I want to give up the whole lifestyle I had prior to coming in here, with the whole gang situation. Even though I do it now, I don't even sit at the table with the Kings anymore. "Why you don't sit here any more?" It's not 'cause of that alone. It's because of the fact that the ones that are here aren't all real and true.

While Damien had expressed his interests in "giving up" the lifestyle, he was pressured by his associates to identify with them through eating with them. And while he the primary reason he did not sit with the table was his desire to leave the gang, he also claimed that the "trueness" of the gang, its adherence to the principles of the gang as he understood them, was not adequate and thus prevented him from sitting with them.

Paulie provided an interesting case highlighting even further the race and identity politics that can be seen through the spatial distribution of seating in the dining hall.

Every little county got their own table. I don't know if it's a big deal. But there's one table that's the skinner table. That's what they call it. You don't sit there. But then there are people who are respected who sit there, because they just don't care what that person thinks, so they're going to sit there. And they sit there and they eat their food and no one says nothing to them. ... Like I said, I'm the only Caucasian, me and my sister, in my family. So, I grew up with all different types of everybody. So in here, like when I go to the library, I think it's almost all Spanish people that I go to the library with. When I sit at the chow hall, I'll go sit at any table. My brother has a lot of friends here and stuff like that, so I know them, and I'll say hi to them or see how they're doing. My brother actually has a brother who is here, on his father's side. So I'll always go sit next to him. He's African-American! So I'll go sit next to him, start having a full conversation with him, right in his seat. And no one at that table will say

anything to me.

Stephen, a young man in his fifth of up to 10 years for manslaughter, relates a similar story.

People in here are pretty race separated. I'm not. My best friend's Black. I don't care. I came in, I wasn't racist. I'm not going to leave racist. But, I am wary of the other races because, for the most part they're like that. They'll stab somebody in the back just cause they're not black or Spanish or white or something. Like, my man, he's different. He's like me. He's like, "I don't give a shit about all that." He'll sit where he wants. He sat at my table, at the white table. I called him over and said sit down. And anybody who said anything, I told them to shut their mouth. You know what I mean. I said, "You got a problem with it, what are you going to do about it?" Plain and simple.

In both of these cases, we can see that race relations are mapped out spatially in the dinning hall. In both of these cases we can also see that people can cross the invisible lines, but others will certainly take note, if not outright confront the person.

Andres also notes, however, that some institutions have even finer grained informal rules regarding behaviors during mealtimes.

In Walpole, you leave—I know you're [points to me] coming, your block's coming next and you sit at the table, so I'll say, okay she [using me as an example] likes having extra milks. I'll leave the milk there because I don't drink it and you know that's for you because I left it there. And no one would touch that. No one out of that table would touch that.

It is clear, then, that a complex and meaningful rule of order develops around the space of both cells and dining halls and the way that people occupy it.

Ingrained Control

The embodied experience of prison cannot be contemplated without reference the nature of administrative physical control of the incarcerated. When I asked inmates

what they missed from their lives prior to incarceration, eighty percent (28/35) (see Table 6) mentioned freedom specifically or the ability to make their own choices about what they did when. This was described in very physical terms by Gordo:

EE: What stresses you out?

G: Lack of control stresses me out.

EE: That's a good one. Yeah. Control over what?

G: Control over my own—well, you know, you have these—You can control your behavior and your attitude, but as far as, you know, physical control over what I can and can't do—asking for a shower, you know, can I get in the shower, can I do this, can I do that. I'm 33 years old. I have my own kids, you know what I mean?

Paulie also describes what he misses in terms of his body and of control:

EE: What are the things you miss right now?

P: Main thing, take a shower when I want to take a shower, not when the doors are popped. Just go outside and go for a walk instead of waiting for movement. ... Not having a half an hour to eat chow. It's crazy! They say you should eat your food slow and they're telling me to eat fast. I miss my kids, of course. I always miss my kids. Pick up the phone and calling someone.

Foucault ([1975] 1995) argues that as systems of discipline are enacted, the object of those systems, in this case the prisoner body, comes to act with an internalized self-discipline, such that constant surveillance is unnecessary. Evidence of an internalization of self-discipline abounds. I use examples culled from an online discussion forum for the formerly incarcerated and their loved ones (Prison Talk)⁴¹ about habits that they (or their partners) still carry with them even after their incarceration has ended.

⁴¹ Prison Talk is an anonymous online forum for people who are incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and the loved ones of people incarcerated and formerly incarcerated. The site has 420,719 members and hosts 546,950 threads containing 6,767,866 posts. There is no data as to the demographic or criminal justice background of the membership, although there is clearly considerable participation by both the formerly

The most common habits described were related to food (37.2%), followed by cleanliness or tidiness of the physical space of the person (27.3%), then behaviors related to staying on guard in public (23%). Table 3 lists all of the types of behaviors given in the thread. These varying behaviors demonstrate both the pervasive control over the physical and psychological lives that prison environments have on inmates, but also the longevity of this control, even years into the lives of those released.

In some cases it was related to particular appearance, clothing, and bodily hygiene and cleanliness habits:

1. I stick my toothbrush holder in my pocket while brushing my teeth to avoid laying it on the sink (you know those sinks inside are pretty dirty!).
2. I step out of the shower into my shower shoes (at least I don't wear them in the shower any more). (soon2Bsentenced)

... I still use conditioner for shaving cream. ...after being [o]ut since end of 2009 I'm doing pretty good! (Hypnotiezinbabe)

Other people gave descriptions of an attention to neatness and cleanliness of living space.

Been out for almost 5 years after a three year hike... I still fold up my clothes prison style.

(WaitingOnEddie)

I've been home 6 years this month... I am OCD about my house. Everything has it's [sic] place. If one this is moved even a smidge, I will notice.

(sweetfreedom)

incarcerated and family and loved ones of the incarcerated. The website provides a place for people to share information about and experiences in specific institutions as well as share general concerns and stories.

Glad to see it's not just me. ... Go crazy if I didn't make the bed when I get up. Am constantly cleaning, am so damn punctual it sucks. ... It goes on and on. And I've been out almost a year now.

(Rainda)

An attention to cleanliness (hygiene and the removal of dirt and contagion) was mentioned often, as was tidiness (an attention to order and placement of objects). One of the forum participants explained the careful maintenance of clean quarters:

You were required to keep things neat and orderly. I guess it made shake downs easier on the co's.

(JamesFree)

This explanation is no doubt the formal (overt) reason for forcing inmates to maintain their living units to an exacting degree. We can also surmise, however, that the careful inculcation of one's own control, as posited by Foucault, is an outcome, even if unintended today.

Other ingrained practices included recreating inmate-cooked foods and eating quickly. People also reported asking permission or showing deference, habits that did not occur prior to incarceration.

I did 7 years flat, ...and I've been out for 1 1/2 months. ...I'm 35, and I keep asking permission to lay down, to go outside, to take the car to the store, to go to the car from the store and wait.

(knd2008)

my man ... always says 'excuse me' if anyone enters his personal space ...

(Tried&True)

What bugs me most is that he's 39 and he always has this sort of humbleness around anyone in authority, and some people who aren't. Like waiters or sales people. He's always looking down and says yes sir, no mam like they are his parents. **That** depresses the hell out of me.

(goopkat)

In the introduction, I highlighted an account of a former inmate and his colleagues walking by an elementary school and falling to the ground upon hearing the recess bell. Such an involuntary response to an external stimulus, perhaps the most disturbing of ingrained control evidence, was not uncommon in the forums.

I've been out since feb [sic] of 2010 and am still waiting for that whistle for count time. ... I accidentally kicked my wife when she tried to wake me up by gently touching my leg while I was asleep. She got me back though by blowing a whistle while standing outside the bedroom and laughed as I jumped up and stood beside the bed before realizing that I was at home.

(Dais2999)

Around 4 pm every day, I feel like I need to be standing. ... I was working over by the prison the other day. I have been in both XXX and XXX. The horn went off for count, and my heart kinda' jumped for a minute because I have not heard that sound in a long time. Then I smiled. I drove right past the prison knowing that the institutional count is clear... I felt so much better...

(CrazyMailMan)

Oh I forgot about this, for a couple of months after my release, before I'd leave the house I'd find myself starting to check if I had my name badge on.

(ibelieve01)

A common refrain among the replies on the forum board was noting how long these behaviors persisted, and, on occasion, emotional pleas for the ingrained control to end (all italics added).

It has been almost 2 years since my release from a 10-year flat sentence. I too HAVE to sit in a corner where I can always see the entire area. ... I get panic attacks when around a lot of people. ... My close area is always neat and tidy, and my sleeping pattern has pretty much remained the same. ... *I for one am still awaiting [sic] for the change back to the way I was before...*

(Rainda)

A year and a half out, I come awake at 3:30 am, I go back to sleep, but it's there. I'm compulsive about making the bed and eating in less than 10 minutes. Probably much more than I'm aware of, when I write a letter the urge too put my number behind my name is still there. *Dang they certainly do a good job of making us an "offender", but I try to resist much of my training.*
(heartfriend)

I came home in Jan. 2008 after doing 9 years. I still want to wear hoods all the time. I wear showershoe type slippers around the house. I wake in the morning, and clean my area, and make the bed. Can't sleep past 5:00 am. I eat at the same time as I did while on the inside. I go to the store and prepare for a week as if I was only going to be going every 7 days. *Will this ever change. It has been 8 months now ...*

(sammy_whiteside)

I am new to this forum and it's really nice to be able to communicate with people who "get it". It's funny that I have been out for 12 years and off paper [off of community surveillance, like parole] for the last 11, but *I still think about my experience at least once every day.* I am glad to have found this forum.

(Willow_Fay)

I've been out for 8 years now, after doing 5 years 3 months. I try to keep a positive attitude about my past, but that's getting more and more difficult. ... I've never been very outgoing or a big smiler, but this is ridiculous. *Been out 8 years and I'm still in a cell.*

(SyntaxError)

As you can see, the longevity of ingrained control can be both far greater than expected, and also very painful to tolerate psychologically. From 1-½ months to 12 years, people feel the effects of their incarceration in their embodied experience through repeated behaviors, preferences in food and clothing, and automatic responses to sounds and other stimuli.

...for a couple months after my release, before I'd leave the house I'd find myself starting to check if I had my name badge on. (ibelieve01)

These are but a few examples of the ways in which the practices described throughout this chapter have become embodied, in some cases permanently. The daily disciplines of the body and space in an inmate's life can extend far beyond the temporal and spatial confines of the prison.

Table 3: Types of Inmate Behavior after Release (PrisonTalk Forum)

Behavior	% (n/121)*
Food preparation/consumption/preferences	37.2% (45)
Tidiness/Environmental cleanliness	27.3% (33)
Staying on guard in public places	23.1% (28)
Involuntary response to stimuli (ingrained control)	14.9% (18)
Negative emotion to sounds (sirens, keys)	10.7% (13)
Body hygiene/cleanliness	9.1% (11)
Discomfort in public/crowds/groups of people	7.4% (9)
Preference of clothing	6.6% (8)
Negative response to people/situations/symbols of authority	5% (6)
Attachment to material objects from inside	4.1% (5)
Automatic use of prison ID # (or use as PIN)	3.3% (4)
Preference/need to walk in a straight line	2.5% (3)
Ease of resort to violence	1.7% (2)

Use of language/slang	1.7% (2)
Greater comfort with other ex-cons	.8% (1)

* Some people provided more than one example of behavior when answering the forum question, "Does anyone else have little things they still do from prison?"

4 The Identity Economics of a Confined Life

In October of 2007, I began volunteering as an educator at a medium- and maximum-security prison outside of Bordentown in NJ. The facility houses adult prisoners who are under the age of 30 and have a sentence length of 5 years or more. Most of these young men are convicted for violent crimes and gang affiliation in the prison is near 100%. My youngest student was 15 years old, serving a 15-year sentence as an adult.

One day, about a month into my time there, I witnessed a student using elaborate hand and body gestures. I asked the teacher, "What is he doing?" and she said, "Oh, it's commissary day. He's talking to his friend." I looked, and there was another inmate who was not a member of the class, and therefore not allowed in the room. He was looking in through the window in the door. The student was talking to his friend using an elaborate sign language, communicating a precise economic transaction: what items he wanted and how many of them.

This was an a-ha moment for me. I was fascinated, both by the creativity and intelligence inherent in such a made-up language, and by what motivated this invention--- participation in the market. As you might guess, this sent my sociological imagination into over drive, and I began looking for evidence of economic activity everywhere.

For example, I learned that a young man had bribed a guard into smuggling a bottle of cologne into the prison. The young man then bought lotion from the commissary,

doctored it with the cologne, and sold it to the inmates at a mark-up. This was something that was simply not well-explained by traditional economic accounts. The functional quality of the lotion as a moisturizer was unchanged, and the inmates had little-to-no physical contact with the outside world. Why were they willing to pay for this cologne? Economics would tell us to fold it into the utility function, but there was seemingly no utility in either the lotion or the cologne. Nor does traditional economics explain the preference for these goods or the process for which these goods and services are created or sold.

The role of economic activity in society, of the exchange of goods and services, is profound and wide-ranging. Markets structure relationships, perpetuate inequalities, and serve as arenas for cultural expression. Exchanges pervade life, even intimate relationships and areas of sociality considered hostile to economic logic and commodification, but relationships also shape markets and monetary arrangements (Zelizer 2000; Zelizer 2002; Zelizer 2005c; Zelizer 2007). So important to understanding social structure, norms, and culture is the study of political economy that the cornerstone texts of sociology – Marx’s *German Ideology* ([1845b] 1978) and *Capital* ([1867a] 1978), Durkheim’s *The Division of Labor in Society* ([1893] 1984), Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([1904] 2001) and *Economy and Society* ([1923] 1978), and Simmel’s *The Philosophy of Money* ([1907] 2004) – all concern themselves with the topic.

The contents of markets and the associated transactions that go with them are often direct expressions of identity. Further, exchanges for goods and services at times carry explicit terms and conditions, but just as often they are governed by tacit rules of behavior and coding. The norms of exchange exist at both the conscious and unconscious level and so point us to understanding norms and ethics beyond the market.

Thus the study of markets tells us about people's identities and it tells us about the morals and meanings that people attach to their exchanges. This chapter is particularly interested in how identity is reflected in formal and informal markets and how ethical codes shape the economy. More specifically, I argue that markets for goods and services are a means for inmates to recover lost identities and express themselves in ways that reflect their pre-incarceration selves. I also argue that, despite a popular conception of prison economies as being rife with drugs and sex, the majority of daily transactions are structured around goods and services such as food, hairstyling, and housekeeping. The contents of these markets further highlight the role of material culture in identity expression.

I demonstrate that the markets in prison, just as outside the walls, are arenas of intense moralizing. While popular media portrayals of inmate economies highlight amoral or immoral exchanges, in fact transactions inside are guided by the same moral principles that undergird life outside the prison. Pricing, loan repayment, and gifting are all examples of economic practices that are shaped by specific ethical beliefs. While it is true that violence is the final guarantee, reputation, honor, and impulses to do what

is “right” are all used just as – or more – often to ensure transactions. And, similar to studies in the economies of the street (Fernandez-Kelly 2015; Fernandez-Kelly and Konczal 2005; Venkatesh 2006), I find that prisoners rely on ethical claims to justify or exculpate their participation in illicit transactions.

Prisons offer a particularly interesting place to study questions of market and meaning due to the semi-closed nature of the economies and the scarcity and regulations inherent in the environments. By design, prisons are places of austerity and tight regulation. Material goods, nutrition, even human contact, are reduced to levels deemed humane but little more. Regulation of goods and services required to meet these paltry standards are governed completely by the prison administration. All other transactions are strictly forbidden and thus illicit. This regulation includes monitoring of all monetary transactions. Inmates are never allowed to handle any form of legal tender, and so prisons are devoid of cash money. This creates an environment that relies on barter, elaborate loan systems, alternative currencies, and protracted and complicated financial transactions through third parties beyond the walls. For all these reasons, prisons are an excellent place to study identity and morality in economics.

In this chapter I present a theoretical foundation that allows us to tie identity and morality to economic transactions. I then present the formal economy of a prison, including data on inmate account income and expenditures at Shirley, details of spending on the canteen and the telephone, and inmate reflections on formal employment inside the prison. I then move to the informal economy, describing one particular activity, the hustle, and its role in the prison political economy and the role of

inmate currencies. I then present the concept of the expressive economy and how it is an extension of inmates' identity and morality. I then turn to the practices of altruism and gifting inside the prison. I conclude with a discussion of how all of these practices are reflections of identity and morality.

Markets and Identities

The contents of markets, the goods and services exchanged, are directly related to the identities of the people buying and selling them. Akerlof and Kranton (Akerlof and Kranton 2000; Akerlof and Kranton 2010) demonstrate that including identity into analyses creates predictions that classical economics does not and offers explanations that elude current economists. In their words, "Identity can account for many phenomena that current economics cannot well explain" (2000 p. 715). Including identity theory into economic analysis "yields predictions, supported by existing evidence, that are different from those of existing economic models" (716). It explains behavior that is considered maladaptive or self-destructive or simply counter to self-interest.

They point to examples of economic choices made based on individual preferences that rest in self-images and norms that are active at the individual and group level. For example, charitable giving, especially alumni giving, is tied directly to a person's sense of group membership and identity. Thus markets and economic transactions are not driven simply by the profit motive, but are shaped profoundly by

the ways that people see themselves, how those images are expressed, and the ways that people react to one another's behavior.

Clothing and hairstyles are important expressions of self and are, today, significant components of a person's spending. Similarly, food is intimately tied with individual and group identity and thus comestibles markets are particularly laden with meaning (Bourdieu 1993; Chan 2010; Fischler 1988; Levi-Strauss [1966] 1983, among many others). Thus consumption, a critical but often overlooked aspect of market activity, is profoundly shaped by self and identity, and consumption itself is used to communicate identity (Wherry 2012b; Zelizer 2005b; Veblen [1899] 2007)

Markets and Morality

Economic activity, like all human activity, is shaped by ethical codes. These moral principles determine what objects and kinds of labor can be monetarily valued, when such transactions can take place, between whom trades are allowed, and many other aspects of exchange. Economic sociology and anthropology are rich with studies highlighting the contextual moral contours of commercial trades. For example, for a significant period of the history of social and commercial assurance practices, life insurance was considered simply immoral (Zelizer 1978). The very idea of indemnifying a life went against prevailing norms of what kinds of things could be acceptably priced and exchanged. Similarly, human organs and blood have typically been considered beyond commodification (Healy 2006), although eggs, sperm, and adoption can be

commercially priced under the guise of “donations” and gifts (see, for example, Almeling 2011; Landes and Posner 1978; Spar 2007; Zelizer 1994).

Markets are not just shaped by norms and moral codes, however. Just as markets are arenas for cultural expression, markets are also arenas for moral expression. As this chapter will demonstrate, production, transactions, and consumption are all opportunities to make judgments, adhere to ethical codes, and to express beliefs about what is “good” or “bad.”

Finally, economic activity itself has also been seen as having inherently moral interpretations. Fourcade and Healy (2007) demonstrate that market behavior has been interpreted alternately as civilizing, destructive, or feeble and ultimately moralized itself.

Below I provide evidence for a rich language of morality that is present when people were talking to me about their economic activity inside a prison. That the prison forbids most economic activity makes it laden with ethical claims and appeals to necessity. Further, just as on the outside, inmates’ market participation, currencies, and production and consumption are shaped by the relationships that they enact, which themselves carry moral codes.

The Political Economy of the Prison

“Every prison administrator knows the state of the economy inside their walls.” This statement was made plainly and unequivocally by Martin Horn, a professor of criminology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New

York and director of KeyPoint Government Solutions, a security and investigative consulting firm to the government. Prior to his work as a professor and in the private sector, Horn was the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation and the New York City Department of Correction (two positions held simultaneously for nearly seven years). Prior to that he was Pennsylvania's Secretary of Corrections, and even earlier chief operating officer of the New York State Division of Parole, among several other positions. Horn was clear that while administrations actively work to curtail contraband and informal economic activity inside prisons, not all such materials and activities could be eradicated from inside. Good prison administrators thus were at least aware of the economic activity, if not always able to quash it (Personal conversation, September 13, 2010).

There are many transactions that occur inside a prison, between and among the administration, inmates, lawyers, officers, civilian workers, and family and friends of the incarcerated. All of these transactions are exchanges, marked by rules of engagement and particular currencies. An exchange relation might be marked by verbal exchanges such as, "Yes, sir," "Thank you," "I love you," or "I want to hire your services." Each of these verbal utterances is a part of a verbal exchange marking particular transactions and social relations. The modes and variations of exchange are a way of understanding social order and the nature of particular relationships.

The transactional character of social life is disrupted through incarceration. The means of generating money for payment, the actual currency itself, and the typical face-to-face transactions of lower-class life are all eliminated through confinement.

Formal Economy

Prisons are filled with economic activity. The cost of living inside of a prison is, despite what the public may think, not free to inmates. Because of this, inmates each have an account (“the books”) to which deposits can be made (noted as income) and from which that deposited money can be withdrawn (called disbursements). The formal economy – that which is sanctioned by the prison administration – includes the money put on inmates books from outside, money added to books from paid employment in the prison, and the disbursements that are made from the accounts to pay for commissary (called “canteen” at Shirley) items and telephone calls. Disbursements from the books are also made on the behalf of the inmate for court fees, victim restitution, or personal payments made from an inmate to another party, such as their family.

Table 7 in Appendix A provides a three-year summary of inmate accounts at Shirley (minimum and medium combined) that occurred the fiscal year before the field research, the fiscal year in which the research started, and the fiscal year in which it ended. As you can see, the total amount of money moving through inmate accounts is significant. In these three years, between 2.4 and 2.7 million dollars was deposit onto accounts, and between 2.6 and 3.0 million dollars was disbursed from the accounts to third parties.

Canteen and telephone calls are the two greatest expenses for an inmate living in prison. Table 8 in Appendix A details the monthly disbursements for canteen and telephone for the Shirley Medium (1200 inmates) and Minimum (340 inmates) facilities. The facility total average monthly expenditures for the canteen in FY 2011 was \$123,885, coming to a per-person monthly average of \$80. The facility total monthly average

expenditures on phone calls was \$34,632, for a per-person monthly average of \$22. This meant that the per-person monthly average expenditure on canteen and phone calls alone at Shirley was \$102 dollars.

Table 9 in Appendix A shows the total and average monthly per person disbursements after canteen and phones are accounted for. My inmate participants regularly mentioned sending payments out to family to help them pay the costs of raising a child or contribute to household costs (detailed below)⁴². In fiscal year 2011 the per-person monthly average for disbursements from the books less canteen and phone was \$44. This means that an average inmate at Shirley was paying out of pocket about \$148 per month for every month of incarceration. For a five-year sentence this amounts to \$8,880 dollars. As you will see, no amount of prison employment can cover these costs.

Below I outline the costs that are associated with living in a prison, and I discuss the formal means of meeting those costs, through paid employment at the prison or through family and friends sending in money.

⁴² I should note here that such third-party disbursements can be used for illegal purposes. For example, a 2009 commissioned investigation in NJ ("Gangland Behind Bars: How and Why Organized Criminal Street Gangs Thrive in New Jersey's Prisons... And What Can Be Done About It" 2009) found that during a five-year period \$19 million was disbursed from NJ prisons to private parties, including known gang affiliates. The report states:

"Many of the checks were negotiated at check-cashing outlets, and a number of inmates told Commission investigators that the payments were for drugs, protection and gambling debts." I want to highlight here, however, that the \$19 million that was disbursed accounts for all money leaving the prisons to private third parties over five years, including payments to family and friends. New Jersey housed 20,786 adults in their correctional institutions, for a yearly average disbursement of \$694 ($19,000,000 / 5 = 3,800,000$, divided by $20,786 = 694$). To compare with Shirley, per-person yearly average non-canteen/telephone payments in fiscal year 2011 totaled \$528 ($44 \times 12 = 528$). If we multiply that by 11,891, the total number of people incarcerated in Massachusetts at July 1, 2011, then approximately \$6,278,448 was sent out from inmate accounts to third parties including courts as well as friends and family.

The Costs of Living In Prison

The importance of the inmate formal economy was made clear to me on my very first day of field research at Shirley. I was introduced to Don, the Chief of Corrections Programs Officer on Monday morning. I explained in general terms my project, and I requested a roster of all inmates to use for a sampling frame. As he printed out the roster, I started to go into more detail about the nature of the project. He began handing me a plethora of materials associated with inmate life, including a list of inmate programs, visitor request forms, grievance forms, and canteen lists and holiday package brochures.

The canteen is where a prisoner buys hygiene and body care items (known as “cosmetics” by the inmates at Shirley) as well as a variety of snack foods, health care items like vitamins, and miscellaneous purchases such as stationary, stamps, playing cards, and televisions. I asked Don more about the canteen list, and she walked me through what a typical order would be. Table 10 in Appendix A provides a list of what inmates consider necessary hygiene items. The list includes items such as soap, shampoo, shower shoes, and a toothbrush and toothpaste. This is the monthly cost of living accounting only for basic body care items. This does not include any additional “luxury” items such as playing cards, a TV set (which costs \$200), additional food, or stamps or materials to write home. The cost of these items amounts to \$23.79.

Few people realize that inmates are required to purchase their own hygiene products or other products they might want or need, such as deodorant, lotion, vitamins, or greeting cards and the like. For those who have no money on their accounts, the prison administration provides a kit of basic goods that includes toilet

paper and soap, but the quantity is laughably small. This can result in people being unable to maintain a level of body care or hygiene that they want.

States determine how they will price goods in the commissary---at cost, such as in upstate New York, or at a profit as in Colorado (Davidson 2013). Massachusetts has an extensive commissary list (see Appendix B), including a variety of non-perishable foods and drinks, candies and snacks, body care items, vitamins, batteries, playing cards, and stationary. Additionally, twice a year inmates have an opportunity to receive a Holiday Package, which is created from a list of brand-name and Keefe-brand snacks. The thirteen-page holiday catalogue includes just nine items that are not snacks or candy---shampoos, lotions, and hair cream.

Goods are stocked by a third-party vendor. In the case of Massachusetts, Keefe Group provides the commissary items. Keefe, servicing correctional facilities since 1975, is the largest provider of commissary goods in the country, serving ten of the eleven state systems that outsource their commissary services (98% of all outsourced DOC inmates) (IC Solutions, n.d.). The Keefe Commissary Network (KCN) serves over half a million inmates weekly, nearly a quarter of incarcerated inmates in the country.

Inmates spend a considerable amount of money on commissary items. The monthly average outlays for Shirley medium and minimum⁴³ combined was \$123,819.19 in 2012 and the total annual commissary expenditure for the two facilities in 2012 was \$1,485,830.26. The per-inmate monthly average for commissary spending was \$83.32. This is a considerable sum, particularly accounting for the paltry wages for

⁴³ Shirley Medium and Minimum facilities are operated under a single administrative structure. In order to maintain confidentiality of the inmates, I could only access aggregated data from both facilities at once.

employment (for those who were able to get it) and the additional expenses of phone calls (see below), required savings, and court fines.

The frequency which inmates have access to the commissary varies from institution to institution. At Shirley, inmates could make orders and receive goods weekly. Other institutions, such as the one in which I volunteered in New Jersey, schedule commissary access monthly. The frequency of commissary access has a profound effect on informal markets in a prison.

Telephone calls

Telephone calls are a major part of inmates' lives. Many prisoners are incarcerated far away from their home communities, making it difficult for family and friends to visit regularly. For those who are willing to travel for visits, the costs can be prohibitive (Comfort 2008). Yet, sustaining relationships with people on the outside is important to inmates. It allows them to preserve a self-image that is separate from the one forced upon them inside the prison. Especially for folks who cannot or do not have regular visits from family, phone calls are a critical venue for people to enact the emotional work of supporting relationships and keeping themselves in the minds of their kith and kin. In Chapter 6, I go into greater detail the types of inside-outside networks and relations that exist. Here, I want to highlight just a few examples of the importance of telephone calls in an effort to explain why inmates and their loved ones spend time and money on them.

When I asked Paulie if he ever got stressed out or frustrated, his first item was unanswered telephone calls:

On the phone, when I call and no one picks up, and I'm calling, and I expect someone on the other line. Because I very rarely call in the first place so I'm kind of expecting you to pick up. Especially if we set a time and you still don't pick up. Why would you tell me to call at that time and not pick up?

The cost of telephone calls varies widely across cities, counties, states and institution types. Costs are determined by the governing locality of the facility or the contract the facility signs with a private service provider, so counties within the same state may have different rates, and those rates may be radically different from the rates for calls from state prisons, even ones located in the same county.

Local jails and state and federal prisons most often contract with private companies to provide phone services for inmates, and these contracts include considerable commissions on calls that go back to the prisons. The New York Times reviewed dozens of contracts and found commissions as high as 84% gross revenue on calls at a county jail or guarantees of \$55 return per month per inmate (Clifford and Silver-Greenberg 2014). Some facilities do not contract with any private communications company, so that inmates must make collect calls from the facility billed by the local telephone service provider

The state of Massachusetts charges a \$0.86 per call surcharge and \$0.10 per minute for collect and advance pay collect calls within the state⁴⁴. Inmates could also purchase a pre-paid debit card for calls which reduced the per call surcharge to \$0.65 and the per-minute charge to \$0.075. A fifteen-minute collect call was \$2.36 and a debit call was \$1.78. The charges are identical for interstate calls.

⁴⁴ All prices are for the time of study, 2011 – 2012.

These rates are quite reasonable given the costs of other institutions in the state. For example, Worcester, Plymouth, Hampshire, Barnstable counties in Massachusetts all charged a \$3.00 surcharge for in-county phone calls and \$0.10 per minute, for a cost of \$4.50 for a fifteen-minute local phone call, nearly double the cost of a call at a state facility. For a fifteen-minute interstate phone call, counties charged between \$14.30 and \$17.30, more than seven times an interstate call at a state facility.

Rates can be even higher. At Allegheny (PA) County jail, in-state (but not local) calls carry a per call surcharge of \$2.00 and an additional \$0.20 per minute, making a fifteen-minute phone call \$5.00. Interstate phone calls at the same facility have a \$3.00 surcharge plus \$0.59 per minute, for a rate of \$11.85. Several counties in Michigan contracting with Securus Technologies charge a \$4.24 connection fee and \$0.69 per minute, making a fifteen-minute in-state phone call \$14.59.

After the period of fieldwork was complete, federal legislation⁴⁵ was enacted in February 2014 that limited considerably the fees for interstate calls from jails and prison. This legislation, however, applies only to interstate phone calls. Intrastate calls (in-state calls) from jails and prisons are still unregulated thus susceptible to high costs.

Employment

The inmate roster that Don gave me included their housing location and their job assignments if they had one. She said she wished they could give work to every inmate. I asked her why, and she stated that it keeps them occupied, which prevents boredom

⁴⁵ The Federal Communications Commission issued a report for further rulemaking in 2013 that outlined their motivations and plan for reducing telephone rates for inmates (2014). The legislation went into effect February 11, 2014 (Federal Communication Commission, n.d.)

which leads to rule-breaking behavior. Unsurprisingly, there is higher demand for jobs than there are jobs. According to Don the main limit on providing jobs for inmates is funding. The state department of corrections allots certain funding to each facility for inmate payroll. She said that as the minimum- and medium-security facilities increasingly separated from each other⁴⁶, funding was being taken away from the medium-security facility, including inmate payroll funds. There were 641 inmate workers according to the December 5, 2011 Assigned Jobs List, of 1542 total inmates (41.6%). This was the maximum employment rate at Shirley, and there were waiting lists for jobs, particularly the coveted positions in the sew shop, as trustees in the living units, and aids in the programs buildings.

Workers typically make two dollars per day of full work, and the typical monthly salary is thirty dollars per month, although a skilled worker (“cadre,” such as a plumber) could make as much as fifty dollars per month or more. Don explained to me that inmates are required to deposit fifty percent of all earnings into a savings account, which is then used for paying restitution and other court fines. Inmates have no access to this savings account up to one hundred dollars, after which they must make a special request to access the money should they want to do so. Don counsels inmates to request restitution waivers from the courts, as their income even with prison employment is often too small to cover the costs. The remaining fifty percent of salary goes into the inmate’s personal account (their “books) for use in the canteen, telephones, or personal third-party payments.

⁴⁶ At the time of research the MCI-Shirley was two physically separate facilities, a medium-security and a minimum-security facility, operated under one set of administrators. They were in the multi-year process of creating separate administration and funding structures for the two facilities.

The reasons for working are manifold. For most people, employment is a means to earn good time, get some money towards their expenses, and have an opportunity to leave their cell on a regular basis. Different jobs have different profiles, some suiting certain prisons, others suiting different prisoners.

Damien, the Latin King described earlier, talked about two of the reasons he works in the prison, earning a certificate that attests to his culinary training, and good time.

Right now I have this job, I'm earning five days a month good time. I could care less about the dollars. My two things about being there is one, I'm going to get a certificate that's going to help me get a job when I get out. That's the main thing about being in there. Regardless I go home in eleven months, whether I earn more good time or not. Getting that certificate, so when I get out I have a 50% better opportunity of getting a job. The second is earning good time so I get out sooner. The sooner I get out the younger my son will be, the more influence I'll have on him.

Earning good time is the most common reason given for wanting employment inside.

Other reasons for wanting institutional employment include getting out of the cell and having access to the benefits of a particular position. Earning money does not list high on an inmate's motivation to work, due to the very low income to be gained from employment. This does not mean, however, that inmates do not appreciate the value of the small wages they receive.

Stephen described his employment at Shirley to me during our second interview:

Well, getting a job, unless you want to go to the kitchen – and the kitchen job sucks, especially in the summer time. You know what I mean, so I don't want to do that. I got a tier job. My job's easy. I like my job. All right, and I just got a pay raise – I'm getting two and half days and five twenty-five and five twenty-five. I mean, I don't want to give that up yet. I want to earn a certain amount of money in my savings account before I stop. That way, there I have something to get on the street with.

Here we see that employment inside mirrors the dynamics of employment outside. Stephen is concerned about the quality of his job, and how much he is making. He receives five dollars and twenty-five cents per workweek to his inmate account and five dollars and twenty-five cents to his savings account. He also receives two and one-half days of good time off his sentence every month. Note, also, that Stephen is concerned about having money when he is released. This was a common worry for those nearing release---where would they go, how would they get there, and how would they pay for themselves.

While this is an ideal situation for Stephen, who also received up to \$75 from what he described as his sugar mamma outside the prison, income inequalities are strong in the prison. What about the nearly 60% of inmates who do not have work? What happens if there is no family or friends sending you money, or if your people don't have spare money to send? Remember the quote from Paulie earlier that some inmates cannot meet even basic hygiene standards because of a lack of money. How do inmates without employment or steady familial support make ends meet inside? I was told, time and again, "You need to hustle to survive."

Informal Economy

In addition to these sanctioned transactions, there is considerable informal economic activity that occurs inside a prison. Goods and services are bought, sold, loaned, and consumed regularly. Gambling through cards or sports betting occurs. Cultural

materials are created and sold throughout the system. And a rich barter and gift economy exists as well.

Currencies

Inside a prison, as outside, money equals legitimacy. Inmates want to establish meaningful relations with the various actors in their lives. Often, money or objects of value are used to establish or demonstrate emotional ties, commitment, or legitimacy. Men inside a prison are stripped of any way to make substantive legal economic contributions to their family and friends on the outside. They become a burden to their loved ones. Any ability to generate money or gifts to send to the outside becomes a way to gain dignity and masculinity.

Inside a correctional facility, inmates suffer from the problem of access to resources. The materials of everyday life become circumscribed. As such, inmates almost immediately begin enacting economic activity in particularly creative ways. Objects on the market may have particular value inside though mundane on the other side of the prison walls. Services are generated that one may not normally pay for. Creativity is seen in how those services are carried out or what gadgets are used in their practice.

The primary currencies of prisons are commodity currencies.

However, inmates also recreate currencies through expressive means. These artistic exchange mediums have been called “expressive currencies.” This particular organization of art production services a higher level of meaning, not simply filling a market-based need.

Hustles

A hustle is anything that a person does to make money. While the word may connote activity that is by nature illicit—such as drug trafficking or prostitution—hustles can also involve activity that is otherwise legal but for its unregulated nature (see Portes and Haller (2005)). Andres explained to me that not all hustles are negative:

A lot of people think the word 'hustle' means you got to do something illegal. I have my hustle, I draw. If I really need money bad enough, I'll do some drawing. Some guys have hustles by braiding hair. Some guys have hustles by cutting hair with comb and razors. Every---That's why I try to tell guys they need to get out of that word 'hustle,' 'cause automatically it has a stigma to it. Everybody's going to think it's negative.

When I asked him what kind of people end up hustling, he replied, “Anybody, anybody, anybody.”

This quote highlights both the quotidian nature of economic activity inside---such as the drawing, hair braiding, and cutting---as well as the ethical connotations that the activity carries. Andres, unprompted, told me he didn't like the word “hustle” because of its negative associations. Moral language is also used by Wayne, a custom letterer and tattoo artist.

There's guys that do laundry. 'Cause they got nothing coming in. The kid on the block, he's not going to wash your underwear. He'll do your t-shirts, your jeans, iron 'em, wash 'em, all that stuff. For canteen or stamps. Stamps, you sell your stamps for canteen. Whatever. But the kid's got nothing coming in, that's how he gets by. I respect that. Absolutely. He's not out begging and borrowing.

Again, we see evaluative language in Wayne's account. In particular, he uses the word, “respect.” This is a term that is rich with meaning inside the prison and on the streets of the ghetto. When men (and to a lesser extent, women) have limited access to the

accoutrements of success, the physical and emotional interactions that denote respect become incredibly powerful.

Hustles abound inside a prison. One inmate, Dominic, made a hustle of selling homemade lollipops during his time in the maximum-security facility. His voice became animated as he described how he came into the hustle:

I was telling some guy, "I'm so fucked up!" He gave me some lollipops. You wouldn't believe how addictive they are. So I'd make 100 pops---I was trying to survive. I sold the whole place pops. I just kept at it and kept at it. It's just marketing. ... If I made 1500 lollipops I'd make \$1000.

Casiano, the young Puerto Rican who talked about his food preparation earlier, was doing a lollipop hustle at Shirley.

Casiano: I've been doing it close to a year, since I first started school. I do it almost every day.

Elaine Enriquez: How did you get into it?

C: I meet [the guy] sitting at the Wooster table.

EE: And he taught you how to make them?

C: Yeah. I make the taffy out of creamer, juice, and Now and Laters or Jolly Ranchers. I heat it up in the microwave to mix it, then crush the Now and Laters around it and use a q-tip for the stick. They are addictive! I sell 45 for three books of stamps, and I gave him half the stamps.

I talked to men who had hustles in ironing, sewing, cell cleaning, tattooing, as well as men running "stores" which sold commissary goods on loan for a mark up. Needs abound in prison, and hustling happens to meet those needs.

Expressive economy

The prison is a place devoid of cash money. The effects of a lack of legitimate currency are manifold. Without a regulated currency, prisoners develop currencies of their own,

such as the classic consumable currencies of cigarettes, tins of mackerels, and stamps. They also rely heavily on barter and loans to carry out transactions.

Another effect of a lack of currency is the need to generate value de novo. The major source of value creation in the prison is through art. This economy of art production and the needs it serves I call the expressive economy.

The expressive economy in a prison serves numerous purposes. The expressive economy in a prison serves numerous purposes. The overt function is to provide the inmate with a source of income. Andres, mentioned above, went into detail about his drawing:

EE: How often do you think you end up drawing, if you need to do that?

A: I do at least 4 or 5 drawings a month for the family, or whatever now. I send the kids stuff, the grandkids stuff. But if, what? To be selling? If I do them quick at least 10 a day, a \$2 a piece, or whatever, \$2.50.

Indeed, several inmates told me about the ways that they use their artistic skill to pay for life inside. Tattoos, drawings, origami-like folding, hand-made picture frames, sculptures, and poetry are all examples of good produces for sale inside.

Stephen argued to me that tattooing should be made legal inside. It would serve a demand in prison, provide a source of income for inmates, and he argued, the state could tax it and make money!

The expressive economy is also about much more than simply getting money. Andres uses his art to create physical objects that symbolize his love, his care, and his dedication to his family.

EE: Now, the pictures that you're sending out to your family, what kind of stuff do you draw?

A: All kinds of things. The kids, I'll draw them cartoons or whatever. As a matter of fact, when I proposed to [my fiancé], I sent her a hand, like this [shows position of hand], with a ring, flowers all around it, her name, 'Will you'---then the bottom---`marry me?'

EE: Did she cry?

A: No, she peeked! She wasn't supposed to peek at it. She was supposed to wait for me to call! (laughs) Last anniversary I sent her a big---two pieces of paper like this, a big angel in the middle, a bed of roses, fire clouds and all of that, and her face---a portrait of her face on the angel.

These objects are a way for Andres to focus on his relationships inside, give him an outlet for his emotions, and create a tangible link that spans the prison walls. The expressive objects, his drawings and cards, are creations of his own that physically connect him to his community once received on the outside. They are symbols of his dignity, of his desire to provide for his family, which is severely circumscribed by his confinement.

Damien also used his access to the expressive economy to create objects to demonstrate his care for his baby mama.

I was having people make drawings. I'm spending what little bit of money I have in here. Then I send her a card that pops open---oh, how'd you pay for this? Don't worry about how I'm paying for it. Just be happy that you got something. Obviously I'm taking whatever I got in here. I'm not going to tell you that, listen, I had four bars of soap and I took three of them and I paid a dude off for it. I don't need to tell you all that. Just know that I sacrificed something or the little bit of money I do have and this is what I'm doing.

Damien makes clear that the particular price of the gift, or the specific means of obtaining it, is not what should matter when receiving the card. It is the sentiment expressed in the card and the general (not specific) knowledge of sacrifice that it represents that makes it particularly meaningful. He is making a sacrifice, and he is using the expressive economy to transform that sacrifice into a tangible artifact for the outside.

While Andres is able to profit off of his artwork, it still carries more than pure monetary value to him:

... I'll recommend them someone else. 'This guy does them too, he does them quicker than I do.' I like to take my time with things. I like to put a lot of love into what I do.

Similarly, Andres values the art that others create. He described the way that new art forms come in to the facility, including a person from New Jersey who creates picture frames with elaborate threading, and another man from Haiti who practice elaborate, origami-like folding. Andres particularly liked this art, and so he purchased the work.

He does swans. I bought a big one and baby ones, a whole bunch of baby ones. It costs, 'cause it takes him a while, for the whole set he charged me like forty dollars, fifty dollars. I had no problem paying it 'cause it takes him at least two months to make them. As long as I've been in I've never seen someone do it. It's perfect. They come out beautiful the way he makes them.

Andres made it clear to me that while he sent out the swans as gifts to his family, it was the art form that he valued particularly.

The expressive economy also has value in the way that it can tie a person's identity from the outside to his self on the inside. Wayne, the tattoo artist mentioned above, used tattooing inside as a way to make money. He argued to me in clear terms that tattooing should not be allowed inside, that too many guys who didn't know what they were doing were creating bad drawings and spreading hepatitis. In his words,

"Put it this way, I'm a licensed tattooist, I'm licensed in two states. Been doing it twenty something years. There's people in here who have no business even touching a pencil. That know nothing about the needle—this and that, and hepatitis. You don't know what you're talking about. They shouldn't allow it. If you got an actual licensed guy, absolutely."

You can imagine my surprise, then, when I went to his administrative file and found three disciplinary tickets in less than one year for having tattoo paraphernalia in his cell or actively tattooing a fellow prisoner. Upon reviewing our interview, it became clear that he viewed his skill, and the fact that he was a licensed tattoo artist on the outside, as a legitimate expression and talent for sale, unlike other inmates.

So we see several examples of the way that the expressive economy generates monetary value, allows inmates to reach beyond the walls to their families, and connects people to their previous lives. This economy allows men to overcome their inability to be providers by generating goods of emotional and artistic value. It also is yet another arena for boundary setting.

Gifts and Altruism

We know that there are indigent people in prison – folks who for one reason or another do not have a regular hustle or family or friends sending in money. The data I showed earlier on income and disbursements obscured wide inequalities in inmate account wealth. I was unable to access individual-level data, and so I cannot empirically describe the nature of the distribution of wealth inside, but we know that people in prisons often have meager resources to draw on.

There is considerable altruism in prison and a coherent ethic of gifting inside prisons. Altruism stems primarily from the indigence of many inmates and the high cost of basic cosmetics. Many inmates divulged that they would give other inmates basic hygiene goods if they knew an inmate had no money. Other inmates, such as Andres, purposely utilize inmate services, knowing that the hustler needs the money.

EE: Now, if someone were to come in, would you help them out?
Someone you don't know even?

A: I tend to help out guys, yeah, that don't have anything. And guys, you know, that are worthy of it. If you're someone that likes to drink and sniff pills all day and they make a \$60 canteen, pay off on that, and they have the nerve to come asking for a soup, I'm going to tell you, 'no.' But if you're someone I know don't have nothing, doing a little hustle, yeah. Got laundry cleaning. I tend to do that. I got guys that do my laundry. He'll charge me two dollars, I'll give him a little extra. He put extra work in it.

Here we see classic examples of moralizing the worthy when it comes to charitable giving. Andres clearly sees some people as worthy of receiving help and others as unworthy. Andres, who himself comes from a lower-class background and is a convicted drug dealer, still adheres to the common belief of the worthy and unworthy poor. The language he uses echoes the protestant framework of hard work and worthiness that makes up the fabric of American morality, even in the streets of the impoverished.

Wayne uses similar language:

EE: Do you ever help people when they come in?

W: Yes, if I know them and they're all right, yeah, absolutely. I know what it's like to come with nothing.

Wayne, like Andres, suggests that if "they're all right," they he'll help them. But he also indicates that this is an "absolute" for him.

Finally, I want to note what Hector said

"I'll give soap if they don't have it. Of course. You're not an animal. At least, I'm not."

The moral language of worthiness and judgments of goodness are used frequently.

Note, also, the clear, widespread ethic of altruism present in a prison. Boundary setting,

such as Hector differentiating himself and other inmates from animals, is also actively used. Hector is also clearly identifying helping a person out as an act of a civilized human being, something of how he sees himself.

When inmates are released from the prison many items must be left behind. Coats, televisions, radios, hot plates, and state-issued clothing must stay in the prison system. These are all high-priced commodities, and there exists an ethic of gifting them to people who remain behind. Paulie talked about the difficulty he had deciding who would get whatever he had when he left the prison:

“The stuff I have, I’m giving it to lifers – they’re here for the rest of their life. Some guys who can’t afford canteen, that’s hard picking between him and a lifer – but my friends here can all take care of themselves.”

Paulie says he’s going to give his things away, but perhaps he is just trying to present himself as a generous guy for the sake of this interview.

How do I know that what they say is what they do? This is a critical question for any study, especially qualitative investigations that are relying heavily on interviews, such as this. I triangulated data through corroboration with other inmates, asking later interviewers questions drawn from examples given by earlier interviews. I also used my access to the administrative files, especially the disciplinary reports, to verify accounts when possible.

An example comes from Damien, the twenty-seven-year-old Latin King with prior drug convictions. He told me about a time when he was given a TV by a departing friend (an act noted by Michael, earlier), but then later had it confiscated by the COs. Indeed, when I later reviewed his administrative file, there was a single disciplinary

report for three counts: 1) violating the ban on the "Giving, selling, borrowing, lending, or trading money or anything of value to, or accepting or purchasing money or anything of value from another inmate or an inmate's friend or family, 2) Receipt or possession of contraband, and 3) Mutilating or defacing or destroying state property." The D-report stated, "TV appeared to be self-inscribed with his name. TV belonged to another inmate." Two of the three charges were dismissed and he was docked a loss of access to the canteen for 60 days. This is an example of gifting in the prison and also my verification procedures.

The prison gifting ethic develops from two main sources – solidarity and justice. Many inmates lament the death of the inmate code and a strong sense of solidarity among the incarcerated. Nevertheless, evidence of solidarity and friendship can be seen in the altruism that is practiced upon release. Inmates regularly leave high-priced items like radios or hotplates for those who do not have them. They do this without expectation of payment and knowing they will very likely never see the person again.

Another reason given to explain the gifting of items is that inmates would rather see other inmates have the goods than have them go back to the state. Here, there is a sense of both solidarity and the belief that the state should not force inmates to purchase goods unnecessarily or otherwise profit from the release of an inmate. Andres uses both of these reasons when asked about giving away things:

EE: Why would you give a guy your own stuff?

A: Well, as long as it's not the only thing I have left. If I have extra I have no problem given to someone 'cause someone did it for me. Someone did it for me. When I first came in I didn't have nobody. I was young. They were the ones that taught me. You like to draw, you can make money

selling this, that. And that's how it began. Pay it forward. Certain guys still have that mentality. When I left last time, I wrote to the superintendent and have her — have them sign off — I left my T.V. to one individual. He had absolutely *nothing*. Not a T.V., he had nothing. I left it with him. And I'd rather have — keep it in the system. I know better than have them send it to the property and get money back for it. I paid \$200 for that. I'd rather have someone else have it than let the DOC — money they already get, keep X money in their pocket..

Identity and Morality in the Inmate Economy

The contents of markets and the associated transactions that go with them are often direct expressions of identity. Further, exchanges for goods and services at times carry explicit terms and conditions, but just as often they are governed by tacit rules of behavior and coding. The norms of exchange exist at both the conscious and unconscious level and so point us to understanding norms and ethics beyond the market.

Thus the study of markets tells us about the way people see themselves and it tells us about the morals and meanings that people attach to their exchanges. The research that I have presented is particularly interested in how self is reflected in formal and informal markets and how ethical codes shape the economy. More specifically, I argue that markets for goods and services are a means for inmates to recover lost identities and express themselves in ways that reflect their pre-incarceration images. I also argue that, despite a popular conception of prison economies as being rife with drugs and sex, the majority of daily transactions are structured around goods and services such as food, hairstyling, and housekeeping. The contents of these markets further highlight the role of material culture in identity expression.

Morals also exist in the markets in prison. Pricing, loan repayment, and gifting are all examples of economic practices that are shaped by specific ethical beliefs. While it is true that violence is the final guarantee, reputation, honor, and impulses to do what is “right” are all used just as — or more — often to ensure transactions. And, similar to studies of the economies of the street (Fernandez-Kelly 2015; Fernandez-Kelly and Konczal 2005; Venkatesh 2006), I find that prisoners rely on ethical claims to justify or exculpate their participation in illicit transactions.

Finally, I demonstrate that prisons are places of expressive economies of meaning. Inmates use their own artistic talents to create products for sale on the market for survival, connect with family and friends across the prison walls, and to express their own human desires for love, friendship, and individuality.

For all these reasons, prisons are an excellent place to study relational economics. By their nature, they make the relational work and moral meanings inherent in economic transactions particularly salient.

Conclusion

I have argued that prisons in the United States pose major challenges to the identities of the people they contain. Much of the behavior we observe inside prison is thus a response to the ego challenges and identity destruction inherent in current incarceration practices. Inmates are constructing, reconstructing, and maintaining their sense of self through profound and on-going processes of deprivation. I show how moral orders are and are not reproduced in prison, and I demonstrate the elaborate meaning-making that occurs behind bars.

I have also argued that prisons contain highly moralized and moralizing societies. While studying the ethical codes and moral language was not the intent of this project in any way, it became evident that I could not address issues of organization, interaction, or even economics without engaging with the pervasive judgments and moral discourse in use by inmates and officers alike.

I engage these two primary topics—identity and morality—by examining the spatial, temporal, and personnel landscape of a U. S. prison, analyzing organizational orders and interests, individual embodiment of incarceration, and formal and informal economic activity. I demonstrate that there is a coherent population ecology that forms organized orders of interests. These orders—administrative, security, programming, inmate, and civilian—at times have interests that are aligned, but often are in conflict

with one another. This conflict is inherent in the nature of incarceration in the United States today.

I also demonstrate that inmates can have an internal or an external orientation while they are incarcerated. An internal orientation means that they have a cognitive and social focus inside the prison. Their lives are driven primarily by the routines and social groups of the prison rather than the outside world. Externally-oriented inmates focus on society beyond the prison. They work hard to maintain contact with the outside and familiarity with culture and connections beyond the walls.

I provide an analysis of inmates' management of body and space in prison, particularly focusing on the sites of the cell and the chow hall and the practices of hygiene and food preparation. These places and actions demonstrate the pervasiveness of morality and ordering in prison and the ways they intersect with identity through cleanliness and self-segregation.

Finally, I reveal how prison economies are arenas for the expression of identity and ethical judgments and behavior. Through informal hustles inmates can choose to link to a prior identity or capitalize on a skill or talent that was not marketable on the streets. Prisoners have a strong ethic of gifting and altruism documented here. Finally, I show how inmates can use an expressive economy of art to create value, act as currency, and transform sentiment into artifacts for people on the outside.

What Does It All Mean?

The qualitative study of prisons is built on the shoulders of giants. Sykes, Goffman, Irwin, Jacobs, DiIulio – these are all classics of the literature, and for good reason. Their contributions still resonate with researchers today. These studies, however, relied on a form research and reporting that has become dated. For example, there are not a single quote in Sykes of an inmate or officer, and there are only a handful of quotes in Goffman's work from his field site.

A major contribution of this work is that is of a type that has rarely been pursued in this field – a book-length study of prison society that takes the inmates and officers as the subjects, using their own words and actions to illuminate their society. I have emphasized inmates reported behaviors and their words as a means of presenting their identities – of how they want the world outside the prison to view them.

This work also opens up prisons as places to study identity, culture, and morality, as well as networks, embodiment, and economies. Prisons should be studied as institutions in themselves, to better understand their nature and their effect on the people they comprise. But prisons can also be sites for strategic research, helping us to understand society beyond the prison but examining what happens to people when they are removed from it.

The Politics of the Future of Incarceration

Prison administrations are interested in effective policies that increase safety and security and reduce costs. But administrators are not the only people interested in prison policies. The hyperinflation of incarceration in America has put penal policies on the agenda of politicians at all levels of government and across the political spectrum. Although the increases in strong social control policies have been associated with conservative politics in the United States (Beckett 1997, Garland 2001, Simon 2007), even commentators from the political right have recently declared criminal justice reform necessary to end high incarceration rates in the U.S. The organization Right on Crime advocates for reform from the perspective of smaller government, family protection, and neighborhood health (Reddy and Levin 2013). Newt Gingrich, a former proponent of punitive policies, has publicly called for the end of mass incarceration (Bauer 2014).

My work provides evidence for the emotional and financial strain incarceration puts on inmates and their families. It also demonstrates that inmates are willing to cope with this strain through creative hustling, connection building, and persistence of hope against high odds. Policies should reduce the negative effects of incarceration—high recidivism and limited (re)integration into society. I argue that these negative outcomes can be tied to the structural pressures on inmates to have an internal (“convict”) orientation. Major policy changes can and should attempt to relieve these structural pressures.

First, I suggest reducing prison sentence lengths. The United States has the highest average sentence length in the world. The Justice Policy Institute (2011) found

that, “The United States sentences people to prison about twice as often as Canada, which in turn sentences people to a term of incarceration more than three times as often as any other of the comparison nations” (1). Our peer countries in Europe rely much less on incarceration for punishment, and when they do, their terms are considerably shorter. The research I provide supports the reduction of prison sentences, particularly for non-violent offenders.

The research also supports the continued use of programming in prisons, and making it even more accessible to inmates. While inmates are often interested in programming for the good time that can be earned, inmates also express a strong desire for vocational training that will help them get quality employment upon release, educational courses beyond the G.E.D., and programming that will promote a connection with the outside. There is considerable research that demonstrates that higher education in prison is associated with lower recidivism and better employment outcomes after release (Fuentes, Rael, and Duncan 2010; O’Neil 1990; Sedgley et al. 2010). Increasing the number and types of programming available will increase positive outcomes for inmates and administrations alike.

A related recommendation is to allow for programming access at all points of an inmate’s carceral career and for low- and high-risk offenders alike. It is understandable that with scarce resources (programs) difficult distribution choices must be made. However, inmates are interested in programming and certainly correctional administrations should foster this interest. This suggestion is also supported by research conducted by Pew Charitable Trusts (2011).

Another recommendation, perhaps radical in nature, is to entertain Stephen's initial argument to allow tattooing in prison. While I do not predict that tattooing will become legal in prison any time soon, it is not impossible to imagine a safe and secure facility where inmates could train in and provide tattooing as a vocational program, much as many do now through barber schools inside. Many prisons also have industrial programs and carpentry programs, all requiring inmates to come into contact with heavy machinery and objects that could easily be a threat to safety if used improperly.

This recommendation is part of a broader recommendation to allow inmates greater sanction to engage in creative arts for sale. Legalizing creative expression as a form of employment inside can cohere with both rehabilitation ideals and security. Men and women should be lauded for their entrepreneurial spirits and artistic talents. Prisons programs can take that raw drive and talents and help channel them into meaningful expressions to share with the world. Along the way inmates can learn about small business development and self-sufficiency on scale that is more realistic to straight life on the outside.

There are a number of things I witnessed at Shirley that lead me to make recommendations based on what I thought the administration was doing "right." The research here supports a recommendation of increased use of the Correctional Program Officer position. Having correctional officers take on greater rehabilitative responsibilities has been an experiment conducted in Finland to great success (Larson 2013). Larson explains,

Each prisoner has a “contact officer” who monitors and helps advance progress toward return to the world outside—a practice introduced to help *officers* avoid the damage experienced by performing purely punitive functions: stress, hypertension, alcoholism, suicide, and other job-related hazards that today plague American corrections officers, who have an average life expectancy of 59.

My observations confirm that CPOs were generally of a more positive demeanor than COs at Shirley. The system ran smoothly, and every inmate can a consistent contact to manage their case while at the facility.

I also recommend broader use of the “Happy Hour” (staff access) principle. Shirley had Happy Hour no less than once a week at the medium-security facility. This kind of regular access to the highest levels of facility administration is rare, and I suspect much of the “docility” of the facility that inmates and I observed can be attributed to policies such as this.

While I realize that wholesale changes in prison design and architecture are unlikely, the open plan of Shirley (instead of an entirely enclosed prison) is also recommended. That inmates appreciated the openness of the design can be evidenced in the way that so many complained about its lack when new fences were installed and movements were restricted.

Further Research

This was a project that I conceived in my first year of studies at Princeton, and one that I am presenting to you today, seven years later. Prisoners, along with pregnant women, children, and the mentally incapacitated, are considered a protected population by Internal Review Boards, and, as you can imagine, the approval process for the project

involved several iterations between me and my dissertation committee, the Princeton IRB and the approving DOC before entering the field. Simultaneous to applying to the Princeton IRB, I applied to the New Jersey Department of Corrections. That DOC quickly and unceremoniously denied approval for my project. I then applied to Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Rhode Island---all in turn saying no. I was considering applying to a small prison in southern Illinois but had sent out my project to a sixth state, Massachusetts, who, after a protracted set of negotiations, agreed to host the project. I was now well over a year into finding a project site. After Massachusetts gave me initial approval, I presented my research as a dissertation proposal to a committee. I then worked with the MA DOC over the course of six months to create a research plan with their Research and Planning Division that would serve the project while meeting research reporting requirements and meet security needs of the facility. It was not until nearly two years after my general exams that I was able to enter into the field.

Research in prisons is hard. Administrations are leery of liability issues, research offices are concerned about encroachment from academics, and state administrators, to say nothing of the individuals in prisons themselves, are worried about “exposés” that reveal the often messy nature of human warehousing. Prisons are often located in isolated, rural areas, and so field research in a prison is lonely. Friends are hard to come by when everyone knows you’re writing down what they say and then leaving in a year. Tears were shed more than once.

Like Wacquant, I believe that we need more qualitative, experiential investigations inside prisons in the US, and I am certainly not alone. An assistant superintendent at a NJ prison said that he thought the public should have tours of active prisons, so that they could understand better the difficulties of the institution. Be that as it may, research in prisons today is a challenge, and it should not be taken lightly. Access is limited, the research process is emotionally laden, and sharing the work with the public is fraught with ethical, to say nothing of administrative, hurdles.

With all of this said, qualitative prison research is far too scarce and should be supported wherever it is engaged. Suggestions for further research include deeper and more sustained observation of dynamics of group interests in prison. In particular, studying the interests and interactions across groups (administration, security, programming, and inmates) has rarely been done. Are the findings here regarding conflict and alignment of interests generalizable to all types of prisons across the country? Or do dynamics change according to region, security-type, or administrative regime? Deeper study of intra-group dynamics is also warranted. How does inmate self-grouping, whether by race/ethnicity, hometowns, or gangs, affect inmate life? Are economic exchanges shaped by these relations, and if so, how?

Future research can also take a more comprehensive and empirical look at the wealth inequalities inside, and ways in which they may or may not affect the quality of life inside prison. How great are the inequalities, and how much truth is there to the claim that in order to “survive” in prison you have to have money?

This dissertation also begs for a study of how the policies of Shirley are related to the docile climate observed, and whether these policies can be transferred elsewhere. In a similar vein, is there any evidence that these policies have an effect on recidivism, or are the effects contained to the facility alone.

These are just a few of the questions that can be explored, though there are certainly more.

Appendix

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Interview Sample

Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	46	38.04	11.64	24	71
Minimum Sentence	39	8.41	6.31	1	25
Life without Parole	7				
Time Served (years)	46	7.9	7.97	1	37
	Obs	% of Total			
Race/Ethnicity					
White Non-Latino	9	19.6			
Black Non-Latino	21	45.7			
Latino	14	30.4			
Native American	1	.02			
Asian American	0	---			
Citizen	38				
Offense Type					
Person	23	50.0			
Drug	13	28.3			
Property	4	.09			
Other (weapons)	4	.09			
Sex	2	.04			
Violent Offense	27	58.7			

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Shirley Med/Min Population

MCI Shirley (Medium and Minimum)			
July 1, 2012			
Design Capacity	1019		
Total Facility Count	1530		
(combined)			
Medium	1205		
Minimum	325		
	Mean	Min	Max
Age	38	18	86
	Obs	% of Total	
Race/Ethnicity			
White Non-Latino	517	34	
Black Non-Latino	443	29	
Latino	534	35	
Asian	28	2	
Native American	7	0	
Other	1	0	
Offense Type			
Person	716	47	
Drug	438	29	
Property	114	8	
Other (weapons)	142	9	
Sex	106	7	
Life with Parole	132	9	
Life without Parole	104	7	
Average Length of Stay	1.9 years (includes minimum)		

Table 6: Count of Responses to Question, "What do you miss now that you're inside?"

Thing Missed	n (of 35)*	%
Family/Friends	28	80
Freedom	16	45.7
Intimacy/Women/Relationship	11	28.6
Food	9	25.7
Physical textures/material culture/objects	7	20
Being outside/beach/camping	7	20
Small things	6	17.1
Privacy/toilet/shower	4	11.4
Everything	3	8.6
Not being told what to do	2	5.7
Getting paid/real work	2	5.7
Home/couch	2	5.7
Nothing	1	2.9

* Some people mentioned several things missed

Table 7: Inmate Account Income and Disbursements

	Income			Disbursements		
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
July	\$176,007.03	\$184,630.01	\$190,370.60	\$366,965.33	\$280,530.94	\$215,192.03
August	\$137,474.61	\$213,196.77	\$228,933.37	\$198,563.59	\$240,096.87	\$260,152.76
September	\$225,999.48	\$224,141.82	\$235,005.57	\$243,360.19	\$205,513.59	\$227,984.76
October	\$196,071.23	\$227,050.94	\$231,186.01	\$134,626.30	\$137,627.43	\$106,794.24
November	\$167,212.34	\$204,317.77	\$199,148.18	\$67,685.22	\$247,802.66	\$445,693.03
December	\$237,637.42	\$244,019.26	\$261,713.36	\$241,811.10	\$314,399.97	\$207,322.74
January	\$184,907.73	\$181,715.47	\$210,810.25	\$248,621.92	\$177,527.50	\$281,524.64
February	\$193,677.17	\$229,650.60	\$256,943.33	\$125,460.12	\$177,870.75	\$205,157.24
March	\$269,611.66	\$273,507.72	\$255,605.81	\$397,276.31	\$297,157.12	\$321,405.01
April	\$198,400.58	\$218,924.45	\$226,051.77	\$187,846.86	\$256,170.91	\$333,248.40
May	\$213,237.51	\$215,740.23	\$213,473.15	\$280,463.91	\$173,831.36	\$238,938.04
June	\$255,731.34	\$231,146.11	\$234,140.19	\$177,769.27	\$212,629.03	\$238,658.48
TOTAL	\$2,455,968.10	\$2,648,041.15	\$2,743,381.59	\$2,670,450.12	\$2,721,158.13	\$3,082,071.37
Facility Monthly Average	\$204,664.01	\$220,670.10	\$228,615.13	\$222,537.51	\$226,763.18	\$256,839.28
Per-Person Monthly Average	\$132.73	\$143.11	\$153.85	\$144.32	\$147.06	\$172.84

Table 8: Inmate Account Canteen and Telephone Disbursements

	Canteen			Phone		
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
July	\$123,068.54	\$119,714.99	\$115,404.37	\$28,907.44	\$31,288.35	\$36,140.96
August	\$120,016.22	\$113,954.92	\$114,674.20	\$23,726.90	\$33,672.30	\$36,603.00
September	\$94,319.15	\$140,495.95	\$110,665.04	\$23,879.58	\$30,886.76	\$36,324.72
October	\$96,378.04	\$119,204.43	\$124,225.91	\$21,627.86	\$29,930.13	\$38,128.17
November	\$95,269.07	\$138,061.10	\$165,186.38	\$29,720.22	\$34,971.48	\$39,353.79
December	\$140,033.46	\$153,120.18	\$90,146.36	\$24,533.25	\$31,756.19	\$37,052.19
January	\$163,172.94	\$108,021.38	\$139,357.56	\$28,074.02	\$36,456.37	\$40,767.39
February	\$92,556.48	\$79,752.64	\$116,745.11	\$33,240.97	\$38,482.67	\$42,038.42
March	\$104,556.22	\$116,765.63	\$148,844.56	\$29,644.01	\$35,745.55	\$41,871.12
April	\$112,184.45	\$164,777.84	\$132,137.62	\$30,854.28	\$36,732.46	\$44,669.11
May	\$115,837.81	\$135,286.18	\$106,188.33	\$32,202.53	\$40,073.43	\$44,756.39
June	\$162,478.01	\$97,469.44	\$122,254.82	\$35,664.86	\$35,593.64	\$37,414.43
TOTAL	\$1,419,870.39	\$1,486,624.68	\$1,485,830.26	\$342,075.92	\$415,589.33	\$475,119.69
Facility Monthly Average	\$118,322.53	\$123,885.39	\$123,819.19	\$28,506.33	\$34,632.44	\$39,593.31
Per-Person Monthly Average	\$76.73	\$80.34	\$83.32	\$18.49	\$22.46	\$26.64
Per- Personal Monthly Average Canteen + Phone	\$95.22	\$102.80	\$109.97			

Table 9: Inmate Account Disbursements Less Canteen and Telephone

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
CANT + PHONE	\$1,761,946.31	\$1,902,214.01	\$1,960,949.95
DISB - (C+P)	\$908,503.81	\$818,944.12	\$1,121,121.42
Facility Monthly Average	\$75,708.65	\$68,245.34	\$93,426.79
Per-Person Monthly Average	\$49.10	\$44.26	\$62.87

Table 10: Hygiene Products Costs (MA DOC Canteen)

Item	Cost
Shower shoes	3.19
Lotion (15 oz)	1.73
V05 Shampoo (15 oz)	1.58
Hair gel (3.0 oz)	2.16
Colgate Total (4.2 oz)	3.22
Toothbrush	0.73
Chapstick	1.08
Toilet Paper (5 rolls)	4.65
Soap (5 oz x 4)	3.2
Razors (x 5)	0.65
Shaving cream	1.13
Laundry detergent	0.47
Total	23.79

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